Civil War papers /

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CIVIL WAR PAPERS.

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I. MINNESOTA IN THE BATTLES OF CORINTH, MAY TO OCTOBER, 1862.*

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The campaigns in the lower valley of the Tennessee river that culminated in the battle of Corinth October 3rd and 4th, 1862, mark an epoch in the progress of the Civil War.

The occupation of western Tennessee and northern Mississippi and Alabama was vigorously disputed with varying fortunes by the contending forces of Union and Confederate armies for many months during the early period of the great conflict; and, while the general tendency of events was to give the Union cause a firmer footing in the territory named, and to cause a gradual recession southward of the Confederate line of defense, yet many points of strategic importance were alternately occupied by Union and Confederate forces as the fortunes of war seemed to favor one side or the other. When the Confederates finally chose the line of the Memphis and Charleston railroad as the limit beyond which they seemed disposed to dispute to the utmost the farther progress south of the Union armies, it seemed that the scene of a decisive conflict between the contending forces in the West was clearly presented.

The concentration of men and material by both contestants in the vicinity of Corinth, Mississippi, was of a magnitude to impress the country with the importance of the impending crisis. The bloody and somewhat indecisive battle of Shiloh, April 6th and 7th,

1862, though claimed as a victory for the Union arms, intensified the interest and anxiety of the country respecting the 532 ability of the Union army to penetrate the barriers that now confronted it.

The spirit of both armies was somewhat subdued and their morale correspondingly lessened by mutual disappointment and damaging results suffered at Shiloh, and they required, in about equal measure, time for recuperation and repairs. When finally seven weeks later Gen. H. W. Halleck, on May 28th, 1862, felt that conditions warranted aggressive action, and he ordered an advance on Corinth, and on the 30th occupied it unopposed, the enemy under Beauregard retiring in good order southward, he realized that he had been slow to avail himself of an opportunity not likely to be again presented. With a compact and thoroughly equipped army of 120,000 men, he had allowed the 70,000 of the enemy, with unclipped wings, to cleverly elude his elaborate combinations. To be sure he had gained a strategic position of much advantage, but his main objective, as that of all warfare, the destruction of the armed forces of the enemy, he had altogether failed to accomplish, a condition that was but in slight degree relieved by the much proclaimed but ineffective pursuit of the enemy. The campaign upon the whole, however, was regarded as a success for the Union cause, and the country felt relief and encouragement in the assurance that some progress was being made by the armies of the Union in the Middle West.

The months that followed the occupation of Corinth throughout the summer of 1862 were characterized more by inactivity and apparent indecision upon the part of both contestants, than by any definite purpose on the part of either to inaugurate a further campaign. An occasional conflict between expeditionary columns sent out to forage the country, or to obtain information of the enemy, slightly relieved the monotony of the situation, but did not materially change prevailing conditions.

To some of us it seemed quite probable before the summer ended, that the Confederates concluded the malarial poisons of the country we occupied would prove a more potent

agency in the decimation of our army than could result from any possible activity upon their part. The deaths and disability from disease resulting from the cause referred to formed a more formidable 533 and gruesome record than the casualty lists of many battles, and reduced the morale of the army to a degree that would hardly have been exceeded by a serious defeat. Typhoid and its kindred scourges became a far greater terror than Rebel guns, in the camps along the line on which the army was now distributed, in the duty assigned it of occupying the country acquired by the withdrawal of the enemy from northern Mississippi. In recalling their varied experiences of the war, I venture to assert that the Minnesota soldiers participating in the campaigns under consideration will characterize their recollections of Camp Clear Creek, near Corinth, as the most depressing, unrelieved by mitigating conditions, of the entire period of their service. The mournful cadence of the muffled drum as the burying squads bore some comrade to his grave, almost continuously oppressed the senses for many weeks, and suggested portentous forebodings, in the imagination of those even in reasonable health, of the probable doom awaiting them. We do not fail to generously applaud the courage and patriotism of the soldier who faces his fate without flinching as he gallantly charges the enemy's lines, baring his breast to the deadly volleys he knows he must encounter, but a sublimer courage is required to face the approach of the grim messenger through the gloom pervading an environment such as is here indicated. No compensation of possible glory to be achieved for notable service to the cause for which he risks his life, is here offered the soldier to inspire and console him. The emotions are slow to respond to a recital of the sacrifice a soldier makes while he combats and finally succumbs to the dread disease, to whose insidious attacks he is vulnerable at every point. His name is not mentioned in the dispatches, nor is it found in the casualty list that illumines the achievements of some great engagement, but none the less his life is given to his country, and his patriotic service is as great, if not so distinguished, as that of the foremost hero of the battlefield.

A notable stimulus was experienced by the army when early in September, 1862, the rumors of activity upon the part of the Confederates drifted through the camps, which were soon confirmed by several minor conflicts in the vicinity of our advanced outposts. The lethargy and depression that had dominated the camps for so long a time were shaken off, and a spirit of cheerfulness 534 and almost of enthusiasm, greeted the orders that now came, for the concentration of the army and its rehabilitation upon a basis of greater mobility. The prospect of an opportunity to render essential service to the cause of the Union seemed to clear the atmosphere of the dreaded dangers with which it had been so heavily burdened, and inspired a hope in every heart of achieving something that would redeem the conditions that had too long prevailed; a hope that was destined to be soon realized in large volume by the decisive battles of Iuka and Corinth.

It is not purpose of this paper to attempt to give a comprehensive description of, or to go into much detail respecting any of the battles to which it makes reference, but rather to seek to give an intelligent recital of the service of Minnesota troops therein. Minnesota, as is well known, furnished more soldiers for the War of the Rebellion in proportion to her population than any of her sister states,* yet inasmuch as she was a frontier and sparsely settled community at the time, the number of organizations she sent to the front were comparatively few. It was, however, her good fortune to have been represented in a distinguished manner in several of the notable and decisive action of the war. The First regiment at Gettysburg, the Second at Chickamauga, the Fourth at Vicksburg, the Fifth, Seventh, Ninth and Tenth at Nashville, the Eighth at Murfreesboro, and on many other historic fields of the great war, her regiments and batteries were among those that at decisive moments contributed to the achievement of important results. This narrative will seek to illumine somewhat the official record of the fact that at Corinth Minnesota soldiers aided in a conspicuous manner at a critical moment in “snatching victory from defeat.”

* Including those enlisted for service on our frontier in the Sioux outbreak of 1862.

It was at Corinth, and in the campaigns under consideration, that the Fourth and Fifth regiments of infantry and the First Minnesota Battery of Artillery received their first concrete impressions of the stern realities of war.

The First battery fired the first gun at Shiloh, and was conspicuously effective in checking the first onslaught of the Confederates in their almost successful surprise of the Union army on the morning of April 6th, 1862. Throughout the fighting of the 535 first day's battle this battery gave evidence of remarkable discipline and efficiency, in maintaining its organization during most difficult maneuvers in repeated changing of positions, as the pressure of the enemy compelled the recession of the Union lines; and in the final conflict of the day when it seemed more than an even chance that Beauregard would make good his boast, that he would that night “water his horses in the Tennessee river,” the First Minnesota battery, posted at the key point of the most vital position of the Union line, five guns in battery, one disabled, its commander, the gallant Munch, severely wounded, never ceased its fire until the last cartridge in its ammunition chests was expended, and the final assault of the enemy was repulsed.*

* The First Minnesota Battery lost three killed and eight wounded at Shiloh. A large percentage of its horses were also killed or disabled.

The service performed by this battery in the battle of Shiloh was not properly recognized in the official reports, for the reason that in the confusion and disorder that largely characterized the operation of the first day's fight, it served under several different brigade or division commanders, being repeatedly sent, in some instances in separate sections, to the most exposed or threatened positions, independent of the organization to which it properly belonged. This neglect was afterwards recognized by Gen. B. M. Prentiss, to whose command it was attached early in the action, by a public declaration made by him since the war, that “The First Minnesota battery never received the credit it deserved at Shiloh; that it was mainly due to the excellent work done by this battery that the ‘hornet's

nest,' with its comparatively small force of men, held out so long against the overwhelming numbers of the enemy."

The State of Minnesota has also made slight, though tardy, amends for this neglect, by making provision for a memorial on the field of Shiloh, commemorating the service of the First Minnesota battery.

During the siege of Corinth that followed the battle of Shiloh, the Fourth and Fifth regiments and First battery were with the advanced line of investment, where they became proficient in the application of the spade and pick to the demonstration of problems in military engineering. The Second Minnesota infantry and the Second battery were also prominent in the operations of 536 the siege, and in expeditionary movements subsequent thereto in the vicinity of Corinth; but both were detached early in the summer, with the commands to which they belonged, for service on another field.

In the action at Farmington on the 28th of May, the Fifth regiment was given a taste of the "real thing" in warfare. It here encountered a column of the enemy, pushed to the front for the purpose, as it subsequently appeared, to cover the evacuating movements from the besieged town. For the moment it looked like a determined effort to dispute our farther advance in pressing the siege, and the Old Eagle brigade of Stanley's division, of which the Fifth regiment was a part, had a spirited encounter of twenty minutes' duration with the enemy, in which the advantage was not decisive to either side, except that the enemy fell back after sensibly checking our advance movement; this doubtless being the purpose of the enemy, that more time might be gained to move their stores and munitions from the town. It being our first fight, however, and having caused the retirement of the enemy, after a really sharp encounter in which numerous casualties were suffered on either side, we thought we were warranted in claiming it as a notable victory, and wondered if its announcement would not send a thrill throughout the country. We became wiser in that regard later in our experience, as we learned that events of that magnitude often failed

to receive much public notice, although we were ourselves, perhaps, impressed with the consciousness, at the time, that we had done much towards saving the country.*

* The casualties of the Fifth Regiment at Farmington were three killed and twelve wounded.

The lapse of the summer months of 1862 had witnessed material changes in the organization and position of both the Union and Confederate armies. Halleck had retired with a dim and disappearing halo for his achievements at Corinth, and was succeeded by Gen. U. S. Grant, who for a time had been somewhat obscured from the public eye by a cloud that lowered upon his horizon, created by criticism, largely, if not altogether, unjust, of his management of the campaign that preceded the battle of Shiloh. The Union army, now greatly depleted by large withdrawals detached to other fields, held an attenuated line along

MAP ILLUSTRATING THE CAMPAIGNS OF CORINTH.

537 the railroad stretching from the Mississippi river at Memphis to Decatur on the Tennessee and beyond. There was now remaining but about 50,000 Union troops in the district comprising Gen. Grant's command. It was possible to concentrate but a part of this force in time to confront the Confederate movement which now threatened our lines in the vicinity of Corinth. Beauregard, with a considerable part of the army with which he retired from Corinth the preceding May, had also been detached for operations elsewhere. The reorganized force of the enemy that we had now to encounter consisted of about 35,000* men commanded by Generals Earl Van Dorn and Sterling Price, each of whom held a sort of independent command, who had combined their forces in the vicinity of Ripley, Mississippi.

* Gen. Grant, on page 395, Vol. I, of his Memoirs, says: “Van Dorn had a sufficient force to organize a movable army of 35,000 to 40,000 men after being reinforced by Price from Missouri.”

While the Union forces were concentrating on Corinth, Price made a sudden dash on our left and entered Iuka with the division comprising his immediate command, just as the rear guard of our forces hurriedly evacuated the place on their way westward towards Corinth. Here the Fifth regiment had a unique though trying experience. It held the rear of the retiring force, and was charged with the customary duty imposed in such circumstances, of repelling or “standing off” the enemy in any dash he might make in pursuit. There are sometimes exciting incidents attending such service, and in this case they were especially of that nature; indeed, the situation became seriously involved. The large negro population of that locality, seeing the army under whose protection they had for a brief period enjoyed “freedom” beyond their wildest dreams, leaving the country, proposed to stay with their friends, and therefore proceeded, like the army, to “concentrate.” In their efforts to keep up with the movement, the rear and flanks of the column were encumbered by a mass of five thousand or more contrabands, with such of their worldly effects as they could move on their persons or with the aid of an ancestral mule. Such an aggregation was, of course, under the circumstances, liable to be thrown into panic on slight provocation, and hence, whenever a squad of Confederate cavalry would appear and deliver a random shot at our 538 retiring column, the pressure upon the troops became a test of endurance that at times seemed to pass the limit. It finally became necessary, for the protection of the poor fugitives, to post a section of artillery at a commanding point on the road, and throw shells to the rear, while our troublesome friends were passed along towards the front.

General Grant's headquarters had been established at Jackson, Tenn., a railway junction point, from whence he could more readily remain in touch with the several detachments of his army, posted at different points throughout his district. The left wing of the Army of the Mississippi was under command of Gen. W. S. Rosecrans, whose headquarters were at Corinth. Price's movement on Iuka seemed to present an opportunity to give his part of the Confederate force a crushing blow, while separated from the larger force under Van Dorn, who remained at Ripley, maintaining a threatening attitude towards Corinth. The blow was delivered by Gen. Rosecrans September 19th, 1862, and, though vigorous in its character,

it proved less crushing than had been hoped for, by reason of the failure of part of the army to co-operate fully in the combinations that had been formed for the destruction of the enemy. Price got away after receiving substantial punishment, and rejoined Van Dorn at Ripley. In this battle the Fourth Minnesota of Buford's Brigade, Hamilton's Division, was actively engaged, holding for a time an important position in the advance line of attack. At the cost of three killed and forty-four wounded, the Fourth Regiment in this its first engagement performed its full duty under circumstances of a peculiarly trying character. It was required to make important movements and confront an attack after darkness had enveloped the field, and while much confusion prevailed on a part of the Union line, during which it received a severe volley intended for the enemy; a combination of conditions that would put to the supremest test the discipline and nerve of the most seasoned veterans. Under the command of Capt. E. LeGrow, Col. Sanborn being in temporary command of the brigade, the Fourth Regiment maneuvered and fought like regulars, and received high encomiums from its superior commanders for its notable discipline and efficiency in the battle. 539 The Fifth Regiment and First Battery, though on the field, were held in reserve and not brought into action.

Rosecrans retired towards his base at Corinth, which was soon seriously threatened by Van Dorn, who, after being rejoined by Price, started northward September 30th with a force, as stated by himself, of 22,000 men.

The defenses of Corinth had been much contracted and greatly strengthened during the summer, thus enabling a comparatively small force to defend the place. The maneuvers of Van Dorn, in his advance north, created a doubt as to the point where he would first strike, especially as the belief prevailed that he would hesitate to attack a position so strongly fortified as Corinth. General Grant therefore held a considerable force some distance west and north of Corinth, at points from which it could be readily moved in such direction as the developed intentions of the enemy might suggest. Van Dorn made a strong feint on Bolivar, Tennessee, leaving Corinth to his right and rear, but suddenly made a wheel masking the movement with his cavalry, and advanced rapidly on Corinth from the

northwest, hoping to surprise Rosecrans before he could fully concentrate his command at that point. There was clever strategy in this move also, as it isolated a considerable part of Grant's forces, effectually cutting off their communication with Rosecrans. The latter, however, succeeded in bringing to Corinth about 17,500 men, with which the decisive battle of October 3rd and 4th was subsequently fought.

Rosecrans' lines had been formed facing west and north, considerably in advance of the main defenses of the town, where he received Van Dorn's attack on the morning of the 3rd, and from whence he was steadily driven in during the operations that followed. The fighting was desperately contested over the rough and heavily timbered country that characterized most of the field on which the contest waged, but night found Rosecrans forced back into his defensive works, and the enemy in possession of the field over which the conflict had waged.

During this day's work and the movements of the following morning, the Fourth Regiment and the First Battery, operating with their proper commands, gave further evidence, so distinctly noted in their service at Iuka and Shiloh respectively, of the high 540 efficiency and discipline which ever distinguished those organizations throughout the war. Occupying with its division the right of the Union line, the various maneuvers required to maintain the line of battle, as it was retired towards Corinth, involved complicated changes of formation, and in one instance a spirited charge to hold the enemy in check, in which the Fourth Regiment, commanded by Colonel Sanborn, was especially conspicuous.*

* The Fourth Regiment lost two killed and ten wounded at Corinth. The First Battery was attached to McKean's division on the left.

The Fifth Regiment, a part of Mower's Brigade of Stanley's Division, was detached from its proper command on the morning of the 3rd, being detailed to guard a bridge across Tuscumbia river, about four miles southwest of Corinth. Here it remained throughout the day, seeing no enemy, though within sound of his guns. We could correctly judge of the

course of the conflict as the sounds of the battle became nearer and more distinct, and I recall that the thought was suggested that the use of the bridge we were guarding might prove of advantage to our own army in its possible retreat from Corinth. When just at night an order was received to retire into the town, it had become a serious question as to how we were to get there. The enveloping movements of the enemy had brought his right dangerously near the road on which we must retire. The darkness of the night, intensified by the dense growth of timber through which lay our route, proved an essential aid, and saved us, perhaps, from serious trouble. As we moved across the point intersecting a prolongation of the enemy's line, we could distinctly hear commands given for the formations in progress, and doubtless our movement would have attracted serious attention had it not been assumed by the enemy, as seems probable, that we were a part of their own troops moving into position. The enemy undoubtedly extended his line across this road soon after we passed. Late in the evening the regiment reached Corinth, and bivouacked in a reserve position near the Mobile and Ohio railroad depot.

We were apprised at early dawn on the 4th of the purpose of Van Dorn to press to the utmost the advantage he had won the previous day, by heavy discharges from several batteries of artillery he had placed in position during the night. The enemy here confronted a more difficult problem than the one he solved 541 the previous day, as he found Rosecrans' army occupying strong defensive works, consisting of a series of bastions connected with rifle pits, the approaches to which for the most part were protected by abatis of fallen timber. The forces occupying these works were C. S. Hamilton's, T. A. Davies', D. S. Stanley's and T. J. McKean's divisions, formed from right to left in the order named; about 17,500 men, including seventeen batteries of field artillery, and a number of guns of large caliber mounted in the bastions.* Van Dorn's army somewhat outnumbered Rosecrans', but the latter's advantage in position probably equalized the difference in numerical strength.

* Stanley's and Hamilton's divisions of the Army of the Mississippi: Davies' and McKean's of the Army of West Tennessee.

The position of the Fifth Minnesota was in reserve about four hundred yards in rear of the right of Stanley's Division, which brought it nearly in rear of the center of the occupied line of the army; here it was held in reserve until called into action.

The early artillery practice of the enemy had the effect to weaken but slightly the defenses behind which the army stood ready to receive the expected assault of the enemy. The guns of the bastions and the Union batteries made a more or less effective response to the artillery of the enemy, a portion charged with canister withholding their fire for the expected assault of the infantry masses. Under the fire of his artillery Van Dorn had worked his infantry to within assaulting distance of Rosecrans' defensive works, and about 9 A. M., the stentorian yell of the Rebel infantry caused us to take notice of a probable approaching crisis. With Price's force in the advance, the enemy made a determined assault upon the Union position. It was firmly withstood at all points except at the right center of the Union line occupied by the left of Davies' division. Opposite this point the enemy had formed a strong column in mass, which, by the sheer force of the momentum it acquired as it charged, crushed and overwhelmed the troops in their front, capturing the defensive works they occupied, with the artillery in position, and passing onward were making alarming progress towards the rear of Rosecrans' defenses that were yet intact. In a confused mass the eager Confederates were already entering the streets 542 of Corinth, driving themselves like a human wedge through the opening they had made. If this force was not checked and that gap closed, the mass of Van Dorn's army would pour into Corinth, and the advantage of its strong defensive works would be practically nullified by a flank and rear attack.

The Fifth Minnesota, which had now changed front from west to north, and advanced its line about two hundred yards, was in a position to act instantly and decisively at the point of greatest danger. Just as the enemy broke through the Union line an aide of Gen.

Stanley's delivered an order to the regiment to support a battery located at a point to the front and right. The order was hardly delivered before the battery was in the hands of the enemy, and its captors rushing onward towards the town. Further orders for the regiment were not required however, as every man in its ranks could see clearly what it ought to do. From the position it occupied, the right flank of the penetrating force of the enemy was presented in easy and unobstructed range of our guns, and as it passed across the front of the regiment it was given a volley under deadly aim that seemed to cut a swath through the Confederate mass. As rapidly as the guns could be reloaded this was repeated with like destructive effect, notwithstanding the efforts of the enemy to form line and return our fire. This condition could not long prevail, and the check in the progress of the enemy caused by this fire of the regiment, to which was now added an attack upon his opposite flank by the troops that had been dispersed in the assault, now rallied and moving against him, caused a marked reflex movement of the disordered and bewildered mass.

As the Confederates fell back, their progress to the rear was considerably accelerated by a vigorous charge by the Fifth Minnesota, which pursued the now flying enemy, halting only when we had reached the line of our works where the break occurred, and where we regained the battery, almost intact, that Gen. Stanley had ordered us to support. The gap was soon closed and our lines re-established, the enemy disappearing in the thick timber from whence the assault had come. This practically ended the battle on the greater part of the line, though another threatening movement against our immediate front was made in connection 543 with a desperate assault upon Battery Robinett, a bastion to the left of our position, but which wholly failed of its purpose.*

* The Fifth Regiment suffered a loss of seven killed and sixteen wounded at Corinth.

Van Dorn, gathering the wreck of his army as best he could, retreated from the field. His movement to the rear was so effectually obscured by the wooded character of the country that immediate pursuit was not made, but early on the morning of the 5th, Rosecrans' army was upon the trail of the enemy, who now found himself between two fires. The

detachments of Grant's army that Van Dorn had isolated in his maneuvers prior to the attack on Corinth, now concentrated under Gen. E. O. C. Ord, met the enemy at the crossing of the Hatchie river, where a sharp fight occurred and van Dorn's proposed line of retreat was effectually barred. With Rosecrans pressing on his rear, Van Dorn now found himself almost *in extremis* , but he extricated his broken columns by a bold and dexterous move, in which he reached another road that afforded the only remaining chance of escape. Van Dorn retired to Holly Springs, Mississippi, with the remnants of his army, where he was given leisure to view the wreck and to inventory the results of his late enterprise.

While the claim that the Fifth Minnesota “saved the day” at Corinth may perhaps be questioned, it will surely be conceded that it was conspicuously prominent in aiding to turn the tide at a vital crisis in the battle. It did no more, perhaps, than any other regiment of the army would have done in the same circumstances and conditions, but it fell to the fortune of the regiment to be in a position to act most effectively in an emergency where seconds of time were vital for success or failure. In the official reports of the battle the regiment received recognition for its work. General Stanley, commanding the division to which the regiment belonged, said: “The columns of the enemy pushed on and the fate of the day hung in the balance. * * * At this instant I sent the Fifth Minnesota to attack the flank of the second column of the enemy, * * * and I am happy to bear testimony to the gallant fight of this little regiment commanded by Col. Hubbard. Few regiments on the field did more effective killing than they.” Later General Rosecrans, commanding the army, wrote: “Col. Mower had ordered the Fifth Minnesota 544 to guard the bridge across the Tuscumbia on the 3rd, when with the remainder of the brigade he went to help Davies. Late in the evening Col. Hubbard brought up his regiment, and formed facing westward on the Mobile and Ohio Railway, with its left near the depot, where they bivouacked for the night. On the next morning, when the enemy from the north assaulted our line and forced it back a few hundred yards, into the edge of town, Col. Hubbard, moving by his right flank, faced the coming storm from that quarter, and by his promptitude anticipated

Gen. Stanley's order from me, to use the reserves of his division in meeting the enemy's charge. He drove back the fragments of the enemy's columns, overtaking and bringing back some pieces without horses of our reserve artillery, which the enemy had seized, and covered the retiring of a battery that had gone too far to the front. Veterans could hardly have acted more opportunely and effectively than did the gallant Fifth Minnesota on that occasion."*

* Gen. U. S. Grant, in his Memoirs, referring to the Battle of Corinth, said: "This battle was recognized by me as being a decided victory. * * * Since the war it is known that the result was a crushing blow to the enemy, and felt by him much more than it was appreciated at the North. The battle relieved me from any further anxiety for the safety of the territory within my jurisdiction, and soon after receiving reinforcements I suggested to the general-in-chief a forward movement against Vicksburg." (Page 420, Vol. I.)

Jefferson Davis, in his "Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government," wrote as follows in respect to this battle: "The center and left pushed forward and planted their colors on the last stronghold of the enemy; his heavy guns were silenced, and all seemed about to be ended, when a heavy fire from fresh troops * * * was poured into our thin ranks, and, with this combined assault on Price's exhausted corps, which had sustained the whole conflict, those gallant troops were driven back. The day was lost. * * * Our loss was very heavy of gallant men and officers," (Page 389, Vol. II.)

In the aggregate of casualties suffered by both armies, the battle of Corinth proved to be one of the most bloody for the numbers engaged of the entire war. The final official record of losses of Rosecrans' in his report, stated them to be 1,423 killed, 5,692 wounded and 2,268 captured, making a total of 1,778 killed and 7,533 wounded, or nearly 25 per cent of the combined forces of less than 40,000 men. The larger loss of the Confederates indicates the determined character of the attack, and also the advantage of the defensive position held by the Union army.

Except to those who may have studied the conditions that at this juncture characterized the general field of operations in the West, the full import of the Union victory at Corinth may not appear. A large Confederate army under General Bragg, moving from Chattanooga as its base, had forced its way northward through Tennessee and Kentucky almost to the Ohio river. At about the date of the battle of Corinth, Bragg was in a position to seriously threaten Louisville, Kentucky, and much apprehension prevailed that the Union army opposing him, under Gen. D. C. Buell, might fail to thwart the ambitious enterprises of the enemy. Van Dorn's campaign had a more far reaching purpose than the capture of Corinth. It was an important factor in the combination of the Confederate authorities to recover their grip on Tennessee and to establish their cause in Kentucky. Van Dorn's success at Corinth would have been followed by his effective co-operation with Bragg, and probably would have so strengthened the latter's position as to enable him to gain a foothold on the banks of the Ohio river. Directly succeeding the Confederate defeat at Corinth, indecision and irresolution became manifest in Bragg's attitude and movements, and when Rosecrans, superseding Buell, was placed in command of the Army of the Cumberland, Bragg thereafter no longer entertained the hope that had inspired his late campaign. Subsequent operations in which Rosecrans drove Bragg back through Stone River, Murfreesboro and Tullahome to the Tennessee river at Chattanooga, constitute one of the most interesting and important chapters in the history of the war.

Gen. W. S. Rosecrans is one of the most soldierly characters in the military history of the country. A master of strategy, unfaltering in determination in pressing his combinations to an issue, he gave evidence on many fields of skill, sagacity, and courage, not excelled by any of his contemporaries of the Civil War.

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Archbishop John Ireland , who was the chaplain of the Fifth Minnesota regiment at the time of the Battle of Corinth, spoke as follows, in comment on the foregoing paper:

General Hubbard has read to us an instructive and interesting paper on the battle of Corinth, in which the Fifth Regiment of Minnesota Volunteers took a prominent part. As one privileged to be with the Fifth on the memorable days of October 3rd and 4th, 1862, I beg leave to offer a criticism on General Hubbard's paper. The criticism is this: In narrating the exploits of the Fifth, General Hubbard, who was then the colonel of that regiment, is altogether too modest, unbearably so, as to himself and his part in the battle.

I will rehearse such incidents as came under my own notice. On the morning of October 3rd the Fifth Regiment was sent some four miles outside Corinth to guard a bridge across the Tuscumbia river. Why the bridge was deemed a strategic point, how or whence it was in danger from the enemy, no one in the regiment knew; but there the men stood the whole day, ready for duty at a moment's warning. As evening approached, the rumblings of rifle and of cannon sounded louder and more distinct. Clearly the enemy were driving our troops, and danger was nearing. Night was approaching, yet no word was coming from headquarters as to what was expected from the Fifth. Colonel Hubbard suspected that in the excitement of maneuvers at more important points his command was lost sight of,—his assignment to the bridge forgotten. He dispatched Quartermaster William B. McGrorty to obtain information. The Fifth, it was discovered, had been actually forgotten. McGrorty received orders from General Rosecrans for the regiment to return to Corinth. The regiment took at once to the road, arriving in the public square of Corinth shortly before midnight, escaping capture simply because the Confederate regiments, marching at a short distance from us, thought we were a part of their own army getting into position, as they themselves were doing, for the attack at daybreak upon the Union entrenchments. Had not the thoughtfulness of Colonel Hubbard led him to solicit information from headquarters, had he quietly remained on duty at the bridge, the Fifth would have been made prisoners, and could not have taken part in the engagement of the following day.

Before daybreak on the 4th, the guns of the Confederates opened on Corinth. The Tishomingo Hotel, with its lighted windows, and a smouldering camp fire in a corner of the square, where the Fifth was encamped, were inviting targets and received the first fire of the enemy. A few bucketfuls of water quickly put out the camp fire. The regiment remained undisturbed for several hours, with the exception of Company A, Captain Dartt, which was detached as a reconnoissance party. The men of the other companies had full opportunity to watch the Texan Rangers under Colonel Rogers charging valiantly upon Fort Robinett. Suddenly orders came to General Hubbard to support a battery on his right front, and as suddenly the battery was seen to be captured, and the whole line of Union soldiers at right and left of it was broken and scattered under a terrific charge from the enemy. A scene there was never to be forgotten, rising as vividly now before my mind as on the historic morning of October 4th, 1862,—Union soldiers from battery and from infantry rushing wildly across the square, at the opposite side from the railroad track along which was deployed the Fifth, and the Confederates soon appearing in hot pursuit. We were no more than three hundred feet from the enemy, who, seemingly not noticing us, continued to thicken their line and hasten across the square, with the apparent intent of reaching at once the center of the town. Colonel Hubbard had no orders, but his cool-headedness and quick intelligence were equal to the emergency. He ordered his men into line. I see them now, a straight line, reaching across the square, parallel to the railroad tracks, facing the onrushing enemy at the upper end of the square, rifles clinched in firm hands awaiting anxiously the order to fire. Nor did the order come in a hurry. Colonel Hubbard, under perfect self-control, waited until the line of the enemy had strung itself fully across the square, until opposite every rifle of the Fifth there were Confederates to be stricken down. Then rang out the order,—aim, fire! And the Fifth aimed and fired. The effect was tremendous, instantaneous. The Confederates fell, staggered, turned back. The Fifth, the brandishing sword of Colonel Hubbard leading the way, hastened in pursuit. Chased and chasers disappeared from the square. Beyond, other Union regiments, rallying from the

confusion into which the Confederate charge had at first thrown them, fell in 548 with the Fifth. The rout of the enemy was complete. The victory was ours.

The Fifth Regiment of Minnesota Volunteers saved the day. It hurled back the enemy, who otherwise would have occupied the town and given battle from the rear to the Union forces engaged in the defense of its outer posts, and would certainly have made the victory their own. Had not the Fifth been so admirably handled, the enemy was triumphant, the Union forces were made prisoners or were scattered in the flight, and Corinth was lost to the Stars and Stripes.

One day in the nineties, in Washington, I was with General Rosecrans. The battle of Corinth was the theme of our conversation. “Tell me, General,” I said, “do you recall the Fifth Minnesota Regiment?” He replied: “How could I forget it? It saved the day at Corinth.” General Rosecrans' memory of the part taken by the Fifth was as mine, that, without the Fifth, Corinth was lost.

In his official report of the battle, General Stanley said, so far as I now recall his words, “Few regiments engaged on the 4th did so much effective killing as the gallant Fifth Minnesota.”

In his paper General Hubbard is right when he tells of what most likely would have happened if we had lost Corinth. Van Dorn from the southwest and Bragg from the northeast would have joined their forces, and the Middle West, so important as a strategic ground to both armies, so warmly disputed by both, was lost to the Union.

Now what gave to the Fifth the victory was, apart from the never-to-be-doubted bravery of the soldiers, the cool-headedness of Colonel Hubbard, his alertness of calculation, his splendid military grasp of the situation in all its bearings, his personal pluck and daring. Those elements in the victory are not mentioned in his paper; they are veiled beyond transparency in his description of the action of the Fifth. Am I not right in criticising my old-

time colonel? General Hubbard is too modest, too unwilling to tell facts when they bear on his personal record.

Modesty in telling of his personal merits and achievements was always a fault with Gen. Lucius F. Hubbard. It was his fault during the war; it has been his fault since the war. Were it not for this fault, the rewards meted out during his career should have been proportioned to his deserts.

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General Mark D. Flower , also commenting on this paper, said:

Mr. President : Before the Council of this Society votes on Mr. Fairchild's motion to make General Hubbard's paper a matter of record, I crave its indulgence for a few minutes, that I may bear testimony to the conspicuous services of General Hubbard and his gallant regiment at a critical moment during this great battle when the tide was going against the Federal army, and when defeat seemed imminent.

It is a happy circumstance that Archbishop Ireland is here tonight, and, as an eye-witness of that sanguinary struggle, is able to bear testimony to the gallantry and timely effort of General Hubbard, who, seeing the Union lines waver and break under the fierce assault of an overwhelming force of the enemy, promptly and vigorously attacked and repulsed him, and enabled the severely pressed Union lines to be restored, and a glorious victory to be secured where defeat seemed certain.

Like the Archbishop, I, too, was an eye-witness. During this battle and the battle of Iuka, and for months prior, I was the personal orderly of General Rosecrans, the Commanding General, and in a position to see not only every movement of our own forces, but that of the enemy as well, and I therefore claim to be a competent witness. General Hubbard in his admirable paper has correctly portrayed the importance of the battle of Corinth, and the dire results that would have followed had the Union army been defeated.

At this period the Confederate General Bragg, with a large army, was operating in Kentucky, and threatening the occupation of Louisville, while the armies of Van Dorn and Price had been consolidated under the command of Van Dorn and concentrated at Ripley, Mississippi, forty or fifty miles south of Corinth. General Grant, in command of the Union forces of the district, including the army under Rosecrans, had so placed his troops that co-operation between the Rebel forces under Bragg, in Kentucky, and Van Dorn, in Mississippi, was impracticable. General Grant with a strong garrison was holding Jackson, Tennessee, fifty miles north of Corinth. General Sherman was at Memphis, and General Ord occupied Bolivar, Tennessee.

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With Rosecrans at Corinth, Grant at Jackson, Ord at Bolivar, and Sherman at Memphis, these parts of the Federal army covered a large territory and were sufficiently distant from each other to render a sudden attack upon either of them possible without ready co-operation. The most effective system of scouting possible, to watch the movements of the enemy and to permit co-operative effort by the Union generals, was inaugurated; but the Union lines were so extended that grave fears of a sudden attack upon some one of the positions could not be dispelled. Under the circumstances Van Dorn with his 40,000 veterans was a constant menace, and his maneuvers were so arranged that the Federal forces were equally threatened at Corinth, Jackson and Bolivar, while his real objective was unknown.

The situation prevented concentration of the Federal forces at any one point without abandoning the other two, at the same time giving up the line of railway upon which the army depended for its supplies. Van Dorn, crafty and able as he was, realized the situation and slowly advanced in a way to threaten equally the several Union garrisons. Such was the situation when, by a rapid movement during the previous night, he furiously attacked Rosecrans' outpost at Chewalla on the morning of October 3rd. The country between

Chewalla and Corinth was so densely timbered that flank movements by the enemy were slow and difficult.

The outpost slowly retired on the main army at Corinth, but every inch of the ground was stubbornly contested. At the close of the day their retreat covered nine weary, blood-stained miles from Chewalla to Corinth. It had been a day of orderly retreat in front of a vastly superior force, with furious charges by the heavier columns and gallant and effective resistance by the weaker. Both armies rested upon their arms during the night, with here and there the shifting of forces on either side to strengthen positions. Before daylight the enemy began a fierce assault with artillery, and the shrieking of shells among our troops in the darkness was appalling.

The main and final assault of the enemy began on the 4th about 9 A. M. A desperate charge along our entire front by an overwhelming force was met by a destructive fire from our entrenchments, our batteries being especially effective. The advance of the enemy was most determined, and, while generally resisted with 551 the greatest courage, our right center was broken and scattered. The enemy, following up his advantage, was pushing a strong force through the opening, and would soon have struck the remaining line on flank and rear, which would have proven most disastrous, probably resulting in humiliating defeat. At this most critical moment Colonel Hubbard, whose regiment was held in reserve near the point of the great and threatening calamity, with that cool courage that has ever distinguished him, hurled his regiment into the deadly breach, and with murderous fire arrested the victorious enemy, who staggered and fell back. The Union line was again formed, with the aid of other tropps the advantage was followed up, and the enemy began a precipitate retreat from this part of the field.

Immediately following this success on our right center, our forces on the extreme left repulsed, with great slaughter, the attacks upon that part of our lines, and a disastrous rout of the enemy quickly followed.

The defeat of the Confederate army at Corinth was very disheartening to the Rebel cause. Bragg not only realized that cooperation between the Confederate forces in Mississippi and Kentucky was impossible, but that the victorious Union forces under Grant might be hurled against him, bringing a greater disaster, and he lost no time in retreating south. It is therefore apparent that the Union victory at Corinth was far reaching in importance, and that the result was largely due to the gallant conduct of our own General Hubbard and his brave and dashing Fifth Regiment of Minnesota Infantry.

Archbishop Ireland is right in his statement that General Hubbard has been too modest in giving his own peerless record in this battle and it is fortunate for this Society and the people of Minnesota that two eye-witnesses of the great event are here to give testimony that will brush away the diffidence and modesty which have characterized his reference to himself, thus helping to preserve his gallant and especially important service for future generations to revere and honor at its true value.

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Following is the official report of Colonel Hubbard, commanding the regiment in the battle of Corinth:

“Headquarters, Fifth Regiment Minnesota Volunteers,” “Near Ripley, Miss., October 9, 1862.

“ Colonel : I have the honor to submit the following report of the part sustained by the Fifth Regiment Minnesota Volunteer Infantry in; the engagements at Corinth, Miss., on the 3rd and 4th instant:

“On the morning of the 3rd instant the regiment moved with the brigade from camp near Kossuth toward Corinth, but by order of Colonel Mower, commanding brigade, was halted at the bridge across the Tuscumbia river, on the Corinth road, with orders to hold the bridge and guard its approaches until further notice. I occupied this position until dark of

that day, when I received an order, through Lieutenant McGrorty, acting aide to Colonel Mower, to move my command into Corinth. I arrived about 8 P. M., having seen no enemy during the day. That night the regiment was assigned a position by Brigadier General Stanley near and parallel to the Mobile and Ohio railroad, fronting toward the west, the left resting near the depot. The might was passed in the latter position, the men lying on their arms.

“We were aroused before dawn on the morning of the 4th by the discharges of the enemy's guns and the bursting of his shells in the immediate vicinity of where we lay. One man of my regiment was quite severely wounded here by a fragment of a shell. At about 9 A. M., I was ordered by General Stanley to deploy one company as skirmishers into the edge of the timber toward the front and right, in obedience to which Company A was sent forward, under command of Capt. J. R. Dartt. A few moments later the advance of the enemy along our entire line was made. I soon observed that the part of our lines running from near my right toward the rear was giving way and that the enemy was rapidly gaining ground toward the town. I immediately changed front, moving by the right flank by file right, and took position at right angles to my former one. The movement was but just completed when I was ordered by General Stanley, through Major Colman, to support a battery, which had been in position about 400 yards toward the front and right, 553 but which was being driven from the field. I moved by the right flank at double-quick a distance of perhaps 200 yards. By this time the battery mentioned had retired from the field entirely. Captain Dee's Michigan battery, occupying the crest of a ridge near the Mobile and Ohio railroad toward the left, had been abandoned and had fallen into the hands of the enemy, our line for the distance of several hundred yards had been repulsed, became scattered, and was rapidly retreating. The enemy in considerable numbers had already entered the streets of the town from the north and was pushing vigorously forward. His flank was presented to the line I had formed, which exposed him to a most destructive fire, and which the Fifth Minnesota delivered with deadly effect., After receiving and returning a number of volleys the enemy began to fall back. I then moved forward in line at a run, pressing hard upon

the enemy, who was now flying in great confusion. I moved on outside the town and halted on the crest of a ridge to the left of and on a line with the former position of the battery I was ordered to support, regaining meantime possession of the abandoned guns of the Michigan battery. The enemy continued his retreat under a galling fire from our guns and the artillery of the forts on the left until lost sight of in the woods in our front, where he re-formed and again advanced in considerable force. I at once opened upon him a hot fire, which with the fire from along the line upon my right, which had now rallied and was re-forming, arrested his progress and soon drove him back under cover of the timber.

“About forty prisoners fell into our hands, and large numbers of killed and wounded marked the line of the enemy's retreat.”

“The regiment expended near fifty rounds of ammunition per man.

“I feel authorized in referring especially to the coolness and courage of the officers and men of my command and their general good conduct during the action.

“Respectfully, your obedient servant, “ L. F. Hubbard , “ *Colonel, Commanding Fifth Minnesota Volunteer Infantry* .”

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II. MINNESOTA IN THE CAMPAIGNS OF VICKSBURG, NOVEMBER, 1862, TO JULY, 1863.*

* Read by Gen. L. F. Hubbard at the monthly meeting of the Executive Council, September 9, 1907.

The recent dedication, on May 24th, 1907, of the imposing memorial erected by the State of Minnesota in the National Military Park at Vicksburg, Mississippi, in commemoration of the valor of her sons who participated in that notable campaign of the Civil War, seems a

fitting occasion to recall to mind in some detail the events of that campaign in which our Minnesota soldiers bore a more or less conspicuous part.

The highly interesting and important as well as the unique and thrilling features of the campaign that culminated in the capture of Vicksburg by its surrender July 4th, 1863, and the consequent release from embargo of the Mississippi river, have been many times related in the volumes of literature that have had Vicksburg for their subject. It would therefore be difficult to offer anything fresh in a general treatment of the campaign; hence it is the purpose, as indicated, of this sketch rather to seek to illumine somewhat the special incidents and events in which Minnesota organizations became important factors. A hasty outline of the more important movements, however, is necessary to give to the special events herein narrated a proper and intelligible relation to the campaign as a whole.

The capture of Vicksburg and the Union victory at Gettysburg, occurring on the same date, mark the turning point in the progress of the great war. In the one case the Confederates experienced an utter extinguishment of their hope to ever gain a substantial footing on Union territory, and in the other they suffered an irreparable disaster in the permanent severance of their own.

In substantial and tangible results, as also in its moral effect, the capture of Vicksburg, viewed from a military standpoint, was probably the most important single event of the war, occurring

 prior to the final surrender of the Confederate armies. The immediate material gain to the Union cause, in the acquisition of Vicksburg, was the elimination of a large Confederate army as a factor in the fighting force of the enemy, with its loss of a mass of valuable army material, and the release of large Union forces for service elsewhere; but aside from this, and perhaps more important in its influence on subsequent operations,

it immensely strengthened the strategic position of the Union cause in the valley of the Mississippi. It gave to the country undisputed control of the navigation of the Mississippi river throughout its course, thus cutting the territory of the Confederacy in two, and practically isolating a vast area from whence the enemy had drawn, in men and supplies, a large proportion of their sinews of war. Many victories on other fields could not have compensated the Confederates for the loss they sustained and the disadvantages they suffered by the capture of Vicksburg. It was a stunning blow delivered in a vital part, its weakening effect being manifest in the subsequent desperate efforts of the Confederacy to save its cause from early collapse.

The moral force this event added to the cause of the Union cannot, of course, be estimated or stated in terms, but the consciousness of every patriot in the North was made to realize the substantial stride towards final success achieved by this great victory of the Union arms. It stimulated the heart and heightened the morale of every army battling for the preservation of the Union. Where it did not silence it smothered for a time the croakings of the disloyal element in the North, and, by the consequent more cheerful acquiescence in the measures of the government, added materially to its resources for the further prosecution of the war.

Like most substantial achievements in warfare, the great success won at Vicksburg cost heavily in the lives of our soldiers, in prolonged and persistent effort, and in the expenditure of military resources. The successive failures of the several efforts in the early stages of the campaign, to effect a lodgment from whence effective offensive operations could be inaugurated against the fortifications of Vicksburg, created the belief in many minds that the practical isolation of the position on the frowning crests of its inaccessible bluffs was an assurance of its immunity from successful 556 attack; and when the genius of General Grant, by means of his bold and original strategy, secured such a lodgment and the position still failed to yield after successive assaults made with a valor and

determination unexcelled, it became apparent to every one that Vicksburg was a veritable Gibraltar that could only be reduced by the exhaustion of its garrison.

The Fourth and Fifth Minnesota regiments of infantry and the First Minnesota battery of light artillery participated in all the general movements, and in most of the expeditionary affairs covered by operations from the initial advance of the Union army under General U. S. Grant, through central Mississippi in November, 1862, to the surrender of the place, July 4th, 1863. As the army was finally organized the Fourth regiment, Colonel J. B. Sanborn, became a part of the First Brigade, Seventh Division of the Seventeenth Army Corps, commanded by General J. B. McPherson. The First Battery, Captain W. Z. Clayton, was attached to the Third Brigade, Sixth Division of the same corps; and the Fifth Regiment, Colonel L. F. Hubbard, was a part of the Second Brigade, Third Division of the Fifteenth Army Corps, commanded by General W. T. Sherman. The Third Minnesota Infantry, Colonel C. W. Griggs, participated in the siege of Vicksburg, reinforcing the lines of investment June 8th, 1863, as a part of Kimball's provisional division of the Sixteenth Army Corps.

Following the battle of Corinth in October, 1862, General Grant's army occupied the country it had recently so successfully defended in northern Mississippi and west Tennessee, being stationed at various points along the Memphis and Charleston, Mobile and Ohio and Mississippi Central railways. Since the close of the Corinth campaign, General Grant had in view a movement against Vicksburg through central Mississippi, and pursuant to well-considered plans had organized a movable column of 30,000 men, which were ordered to converge on the Mississippi Central railroad, along the line of which he proposed to penetrate the country southward towards his objective point. The movement began early in November, 1862, but its progress was delayed by the necessity of reconstructing the destroyed railroad along which the army was moving. Although the Confederates had a considerable

BRONZE STATUE OF PEACE, MINNESOTA STATE MONUMENT.

557 force in his front, composed largely of troops drawn from the Vicksburg garrison, under command of General J. C. Pemberton, General Grant's advance was not seriously disputed, except at the crossing of the Tallahatchie river, until he reached a point about twenty miles south of Oxford, Mississippi.

In the meantime General Sherman had been placed in command of a force about equal to that under the immediate command of General Grant, which left Memphis, December 19th, 1862, by way of the Mississippi river, under orders to operate against the immediate defenses of Vicksburg, it being assumed that the place would be found weakly garrisoned while General Grant held Pemberton's forces in his front. The fleet conveying Sherman's force had hardly passed beyond hail from its port of departure, before General Grant met with a distaster that so changed conditions as to stamp inevitable failure upon the combinations that seemed to have borne such promise of success. On the 20th of December a large column of Confederate cavalry under General Earl Van Dorn appeared in Grant's rear, captured Holly Springs, his depot of supplies, and after destroying the large accumulation of munitions and stores upon which the Union army depended for maintenance in its farther advance southward, moved north, destroying as it went the railroad and its equipment, which constituted General Grant's means of communication with his base. The dilemma thus created was solved by the suspension of further offensive operations and the gradual retirement of Grant's army to the line of the Memphis and Charleston railroad. Meanwhile General Sherman, wholly ignorant of Grant's reverse, arrived in the vicinity of Vicksburg, and after reconnoitering the position moved to the Yazoo river and made a spirited assault upon the fortifications fronting Chickasaw bayou, near Haines Bluff, December 29th, 1862. He found, of course, the defenses strongly held, Pemberton's army having returned from confronting General Grant, and in consequence the assault wholly failed of its purpose, General Sherman retiring with a loss of 1,105 men killed and wounded and 743 prisoners.

The Minnesota troops in this campaign were with General Grant's column and as a rule with the advance command, but were required to perform but little serious work beyond the skirmish duty to which nearly all encounters with the enemy were limited.

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At this period of the war there was a considerable element in the North that entertained serious doubts of the ability of the government to suppress the rebellion. Many sincere patriots had become discouraged, and the essentially disloyal, of whom there were not a few, were boldly predicting ultimate failure, and by their open treason greatly embarrassed the government and seriously added to its difficulties in dealing with the mighty problem before it. The complete failure of this movement gave added emphasis to the doubts of our friends, and to the doleful predictions of our enemies in the rear. Grant was much criticised for his failure, the administration was assailed, volunteering for the army was checked, and organized movements were promoted for giving aid and comfort to the enemy. The Army of the Tennessee, however, maintained its *esprit de corps* , and its commander his indomitable determination to prosecute the campaign until Vicksburg should be taken.

General Grant now assembled his force along the Mississippi river, initiating various schemes to obtain a foothold from whence he could effectively operate against this defiant enemy. One that gave promise of substantial result was an expedition sent through Yazoo Pass, an old channel much navitaged in early days, connecting the Mississippi near Helena with the higher ground east of the river. The building of levees along the river had closed this channel, and since its disuse its bed had shallowed and become obstructed, and its shores to the water's edge had acquired a growth of timber and dense underbrush. The levee was cut and a fleet of light draft steamers conveying a bridge of troops, escorted by a detail of gunboats, was sent on the 24th of February, 1863, through Yazoo Pass on a sort of exploring expedition. Its progress was greatly impeded by the obstructions it met, yet it forced its way to the point where the Tallahatchie and Yallabusha rivers unite and form the Yazoo. Here was encountered a formidable Confederate earthwork

mounting heavy guns. This work named Fort Pemberton, being surrounded by water, could not be assailed by land and was too formidable to be reduced by the gunboats. The expedition was on its return when it was met by a reinforcement under General Quinby who conducted the combined command back to the vicinity of Fort Pemberton. The conditions there revealed discouraged Quinby, and the fleet worked

MAP ILLUSTRATING THE CAMPAIGNS OF VICKSBURG, 1862–63.

559 its way back with much difficulty and in a crippled condition to the Mississippi river.

The Fourth Minnesota was with this expedition, and the members of that regiment often recall and relate with great interest their thrilling experience in working their way through the intricate maze in which they became involved, and where at times they felt that they would become utterly lost. General Sanborn in referring to it said: “The force that went into the Yazoo Pass was in great peril, and the enemy ought to have captured it. It could not have been landed anywhere to operate, and there were many points where batteries might have been stationed by the enemy within their reach that would have rendered it impossible for the transports to pass.”

Nothing daunted by the failure of the Yazoo Pass expedition, General Grant sought another route via the numerous waterways that traverse the country along the Yazoo bottoms, to a point that would give him a footing on the Mississippi mainland. With a considerable fleet of gunboats under Admiral Porter and sufficient transports to carry a division of troops, the latter under command of General Sherman, an effort was made about the 15th of March, by traversing parts of Steel and Black bayous, Deer creek, the Rolling Fork and Big Sunflower rivers, to reach a point some ten miles above Haines Bluff. This expedition became worse involved in the intricacies of its route and the dispositions made by the enemy to obstruct its progress than the one that failed via Yazoo Pass. At a critical period in its experience Porter had resolved to destroy his boats, as he feared they would become stranded and captured, but with the aid of the troops they were extricated, and the entire outfit went limping back to a point of safety.

While these efforts were in progress to reach a base east of the river similar efforts were put forth to utilize the bayous and rivers west of the Mississippi for a water route that would convey the army and its supplies to a point below Vicksburg on the Louisiana shore. The levees were cut at Lake Providence, seventy miles above Vicksburg, and some progress was made in opening a route through Bayous Baxter and Macon and the Tensas and Washita rivers. The impracticability of this project was soon demonstrated, and it may be referred to simply as an incident of the campaign.

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But the enterprise that for a time gave the greatest promise of them all, and that is ever quoted as one of the features of the Vicksburg campaign, was the canal projected and nearly completed across the peninsula opposite Vicksburg. This work was prosecuted to a point where its utility would soon have become demonstrated by its practical use as a means of easy communication by water past the river fortifications of Vicksburg, when a sudden and almost unprecedented rise in the river caused the dam that had been constructed at the entrance for the protection of the work as it progressed, to give way and prematurely flood the canal. It was hoped notwithstanding this accident that the action of the water as it flowed through the excavated work might aid in securing a navigable channel, but the elements consistently maintained their unfriendly attitude in this case as in those of like efforts previously employed. The enemy had also by this time constructed a battery that commanded the outlet and a part of the southern course of the proposed canal, which no doubt hastened the determination to abandon the project.

There seemed to be a final alternative for a water route presented in the possibility of connecting the river, in its then high stage, with a succession of bayous that led to the river below, by the construction of a canal a few hundred rods in length from near Duckport, just above Young's Point, west via Willow or Walnut bayou, to New Carthage. This was undertaken with a somewhat subdued enthusiasm, though with a determination to exhaust all resources that offered a moiety of promise to evade a close contact with

the formidable batteries or heavy guns that frowned along the river front of Vicksburg. This canal had almost reached a completed state, when the waters of the Mississippi began to recede and soon seemed to shrink with a rapidity that had characterized their previous propensity to swell, a condition that in a few days left the bed of this new canal above the level of the river. Many of the men engaged in this work were from states to the northward bordering the Mississippi, and were therefore familiar with the erratic habits and sometimes capricious conduct of the old Father of Waters. These men at the inception of the work had generally joined in the prediction that the very thing would happen that really came to pass, and the echo of 561 their unanimous “I told you so's” lingered long in the atmosphere of that locality.

The Fifth Minnesota furnished a large detail for daily service in excavating these canals. While the men performed this duty with a somewhat simulated cheerfulness, they exercised to some extent the great American prerogative that they had not yet surrendered, of expressing in trenchant terms their criticism of prevailing tactics in the prosecution of the war. Standing in the water up to one's knees and delving in the mud with a spade did not appeal to them as ideal soldierly duty, and the probable results, which seemed to them so clearly apparent, as hardly commensurate with the effort and sacrifice imposed upon them.

General Grant says in his Memoirs that he at no time entertained much hope that these several projects would result in substantial advantage in promoting the general objects of the campaign, but that they served the purpose of impressing the country with the idea that there was something doing at the front, and kept the army in a state of semi-activity which helped to maintain its morale. If the exact truth could be stated, I doubt if either of these objects were served to any appreciable degree by these operations. The health of the army was seriously impaired by the exposures to which the men were subjected. The locality generated all known species of malarial poisons. The camps, being on low ground, became thoroughly saturated by the heavy rains that for a time occurred almost daily, and as a consequence all the scourges to human life that accompany such conditions were an

ever present enemy to be met. Even smallpox contributed its quota of horror with which the army had to deal. The death rate was excessive, and the floating hospitals along the river banks constituted a large percentage of the fleet that was held in the vicinity for army use. The levees, affording the only solid ground in which a grave could be dug, became thickly dotted with the simple wooden slab on which the name constituting the final record of some soldier was inscribed. Such conditions could not contribute to the hopefulness and cheer of men who were compelled to constantly confront them, and whose significance grew upon them day by day.

The gloom that has been noted as pervading the atmosphere throughout the North, following the failure of Grant's advance into central Mississippi, was in no degree dispelled by these added 562 failures of the campaign; indeed, at this period, the early spring of 1863, the depression throughout the loyal portion of the country was rapidly nearing a portentous climax. There seemed to be no silver lining to the clouds that hung heavy upon the horizon, and much sentiment prevailed in quarters where such thoughts could not have found lodgment earlier in the war, that peace should be made, even upon the basis, if necessary, of the recognition of the Southern Confederacy.

The familiar proverb, “It is always darkest just before the dawn,” could hardly have been more fully exemplified than in the case presented by the conditions prevailing at this period. The dawn was at hand, and the premonitions of coming day possessed the consciousness of Union hearts throughout the country, when it was announced that the perilous and spectacular feat of running the gauntlet of the river batteries on Vicksburg's front had been successfully performed by a fleet of gunboats and transports on the 16th of April, 1863. A most perplexing feature of the unique problem confronting the Army of the Tennessee was thus solved. The means for supplying the army, and for its transfer between the banks of the river below Vicksburg, and for the protection of such operations, were thus provided, and were further in full measure assured by a second passage of a laden supply fleet a few days later. As was expected, these fleets were much damaged and some of the vessels composing them lost while in contact with the enemy's batteries,

but a much larger proportion of them passed in a serviceable condition than seemed possible under the circumstances.

In this auspicious manner was inaugurated the movement that comprehended so much, that was to successively electrify the country by the rapid movements and bold strategy with which the enemy was bewildered, his army beaten in detail, isolated in detachments, and within a month its remnants sealed up as in a bottle within the intrenchments of Vicksburg.

In anticipation of the possible success of the effort to turn the flank of the river batteries, the Thirteenth Army Corps, commanded by General J. A. McClernand, had moved by land from Millken's Bend, in an effort to penetrate the labyrinth of swamps, bayous, and dense thickets that lay across its path, in opening a route by which the army could reach the higher ground on the

MAP OF THE VICKSBURG CAMPAIGN, APRIL TO JULY, 1863.

563 river bank below. Its progress was exceedingly slow, as most of the distance made was at the cost of great labor in the construction of bridges and corduroy roadway. It was not until the 27th of April that McClernand had assembled his corps at Hard Times Landing, about forty miles below Vicksburg, and nearly abreast of Grand Gulf on the opposite bank, the latter point being occupied by an entrenched Confederate battery of heavy guns. It was assumed that this obstruction could be overcome without much delay, and on the 29th of April Admiral Porter attacked the work with his fleet of eight ironclads; but after a hot encounter of some hours duration, he was compelled to retire with his fleet considerably damaged and a loss of 18 killed and 56 wounded. Under this protection, however, the transport passed the battery, and the next day the men of the Thirteenth and a part of the Seventeenth Corps were transfered from the west to the east bank of the Mississippi at Bruinsburg, a few miles below Grand Gulf. These troops were at one pushed to the interior and on May 1st defeated a detachment of 8,000 Confederates at Port Gibson, Mississippi.

On the 29th of April, General Sherman with the Fifteenth Army Corps, still at Milliken's Bend, made a demonstration via the Yazoo river on Haines Bluff, which had the intended effect of holding a considerable part of Pemberton's army in the vicinity of Vicksburg, while Grant secured a foothold on the mainland fifty miles below. Sherman retired after executing his successful feint, and, following the route of the troops that had preceded him, joined Grant on the 7th of May.

The capture of Port Gibson made Grand Gulf untenable to the enemy. It was hurriedly evacuated, its guns and stores abandoned, and the position was immediately occupied as a temporary base for the Union forces.

General Grant was now on firm ground on the enemy's side of the river, and though as yet by no means near his goal, he could confidently hope to meet his antagonist under more nearly equal conditions than he had recently been compelled to confront. The advantage of position was still, however, plainly in favor of the Confederates. Pemberton had an army nearly equal to that under Grant's command, with ample supplies at his hand, and Gen. Joseph E. Johnston was on his way from the east with considerable reinforcements, arriving at Jackson, Mississippi, a 564 few days following the fight at Port Gibson. The advantages of the enemy were, however, soon neutralized by the celerity of Grant's movements and the rapidity with which he dealt the enemy one crushing blow after another.

At Raymond on the 12th he met a force of 5,000 Confederates, sent out to obstruct and delay his movements. This he defeated and scattered. On the 14th he drove Johnston out of Jackson, beating his force of 10,000 men and capturing much of his artillery. On the 16th he met Pemberton in person with 25,000 men at Champion Hills, and, after inflicting upon him a loss of 3,000 killed and wounded and 3,000 prisoners and much of his artillery, sent him flying in confusion over the hills toward Vicksburg; and finally on the 17th, at the crossing of the Big Black river, he routed Pemberton's rear guard of 4,000 men, capturing a large part of the force with practically all its outfit. Following swiftly the

line of the enemy's retreat, Grant was the next day in sight of Vicksburg, and immediately began an investment of the place.

During the period from the fight at Raymond on the 12th to the investment of Vicksburg on the 18th of May, so much depended on rapidity of movement and quickly executed maneuvers, that no time could be given to or thought expended upon efforts to maintain communication with his base, which Grant had established at Grand Gulf; nor was it desirable that his swiftly moving columns be encumbered with impedimenta that could be dispensed with. Ammunition the army must have, of course, but beyond provision for this first essential and a few ambulances to care for the wounded all wagons were cut out of the trains, communication with its base abandoned, and the army left to subsist on the country, aside from the two day's rations provided in the haversacks of the men. Thus the army found itself in the interior of the enemy's country, with its rear in the air, hostile forces on all sides of it, a battle occurring every day, and the last certain assurance of a full ration easily in sight. Though parts of the army may have suffered somewhat for lack of food, generally it was fairly supplied by what the country afforded, but in places along its line of march a crow would have starved following in its wake. It was this campaign in which it was said that General Grant's baggage consisted only of a toothbrush.

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The Minnesota troops participated in these operations without suffering many casualties, though in all other respects bearing the burdens common to the army as a whole. The Fourth Regiment and First Battery were on the field at Port Gibson and Raymond, though not in action. At Champion Hills both were present, and the Fourth Regiment, as a part of the brigade commanded by Col. Sanborn, performed important duty under fire in carrying a difficult position on which a large body of prisoners were captured. At Jackson also these commands were present, but in reserve.

In the advance on Jackson the Fifth Regiment held the advance of the Fifteenth Army Corps, the entire regiment being deployed as skirmishers on the 13th and 14th of May.

At Mississippi Springs, just at night of the 13th, it had a spirited encounter with the rear guard of the enemy that was retiring on Jackson. The regiment maintained its formation as skirmishers in advance of the column, until the entrenchments of the enemy were reached in front of Jackson, about 3 P. M . on the 14th. The Fifteenth Army Corps was here deployed in line of battle, and the Fifth Regiment with its proper command participated in the charge and capture of the enemy's line that followed. In the occupation of the town the Fifth Regiment was assigned to provost duty, having its bivouac on the grounds of the capitol square, and placing its regimental flag for a day on the dome of the capitol building of the capital city of Jefferson Davis' own state. During its brief occupation of Jackson the Fifteenth Corps destroyed railroads and their equipment, manufactories, and every species of property that could have value to the enemy; and on the morning of the 16th started on a hurried march towards Vicksburg, where it was assigned to the right of the line of investment.

The investment of Vicksburg had compelled the evacuation of the fortified positions of the enemy at Haines Bluff and along the Yazoo river, thus opening to Grant's army free communication with the Mississippi river above Vicksburg. This, of course, settled the question of his base and brought to the army all needed supplies.

Presuming that Pemberton's forces were considerably demoralized by their recent successive defeats, General Grant felt warranted in making an early attempt to carry Vicksburg by assault. This he did on the 19th of May, before a considerable part of his 566 army had come up. Here he encountered his first real failure in his recent operations. His repulse did not deter him from a second trial of like character. On the 22nd, his entire army being in position, the Fifteenth Army Corps on the right, the Seventeenth in the center, and the Thirteenth on the left, he ordered an assault all along the line. It wholly failed, the almost superhuman efforts of the army meeting a bloody repulse at all points.

The topography of the locality rendered Vicksburg naturally very strong as a defensive position, and to this advantage were added the most complete artificial works that

experienced and accomplished military engineers could devise. Monster forts, connected by elaborate earthworks, crowned the heights of Walnut Hills, and impenetrable abatis of fallen timber guarded all approaches. General Sherman in his Memoirs says that he has since the war seen the fortified position at Sevastopol, and that, in his opinion, Vicksburg was much the stronger position of the two. Against such an impregnable position the devoted Army of the Tennessee was hurled with mighty force, only to find the task impossible and to recoil bleeding at every pore.

The Minnesota troops participated in this assault of May 22nd, and the Fourth Regiment especially suffered heavily in the loss of officers and men. After reaching a position near the hostile works the Fourth Regiment was ordered to move to the left, away from its proper front, to support other hard pressed troops, the latter then withdrawing, leaving the Fourth Regiment in an especially exposed position. Lieut. Colonel Tourtelotte in his official report said: “No sooner had we taken such position than General Burbridge withdrew his brigade from action under a direct fire from the fort in front and a heavy cross fire from a fort on our right. The regiment pressed forward up to and even on the enemy's works. In this position, contending for the possession of the rebel earthworks before us, the regiment remained for two hours, when it became dark and I was ordered by Col. Sanborn to withdraw the regiment.” This work was done at a cost of 12 men killed and 44 wounded, many of the wounded remaining where they fell, suffering untold agony, until two days later, when the dead were buried and those yet alive were removed under a flag of truce.

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The Fifth Regiment made its assault under circumstances that saved it from very serious loss. The broken nature of the ground in its front, with its entanglement of fallen timber and dense thicket, made it impossible to move in line of battle. The graveyard road, one of the main thoroughfares connecting Vicksburg with the adjacent country, passed through the position occupied on the line of investment by the brigade to which the Fifth Regiment belonged. It was determined to make the assault along this road, though it was commanded by a formidable earthwork and obstructed by *chevaux de frise* . The

assault, therefore, must be made in column by the flank, the same formation as presented by troops in line of march. The Fifth Regiment was upon the left of the brigade, which brought it in the rear, or the fourth regiment in line. In this formation the old Eagle Brigade charged at a run along the graveyard road. As the leading regiment, the Eleventh Missouri, with General Mower at its head, emerged from the protected position behind which the formation had been made and became exposed to the enemy's view, it was met, and as it moved forward was as if melted down, by the fire in front and on both flanks that was concentrated upon it. Scarcely a man from the right of the regiment to its colors but fell, either killed or wounded. The heaps of dead and wounded men of themselves formed an obstruction difficult to surmount. Though a corporal's guard reached the ditch of the fort,—among them the color bearer, who placed his flag on the slope of the work,—it was evident that no considerable number could pass the deadly spot, and hence the order came to desist and seek cover, which was found among the ravines and behind the felled timber on either side of the road. There the men awaited the darkness of night to retire from their dangerous situation. The soldiers fittingly characterized this manner of assault as “charging endways,” a most unusual evolution in battle.

The First Battery occupied an advanced position on the line of investment, where the effective operation of its guns was especially noted in the artillery practice preceding the assault, and subsequently during the arduous service of the siege.

The siege of Vicksburg followed these ineffectual efforts to capture the city. Pemberton with his army of 30,000 men was safely corralled within the defences of the city, where he could 568 easily be held, if left to his fate, until starved into surrender. A portentous danger, however, loomed up on Grant's rear. General Joe Johnston was on the line of the Big Black river with the force Grant had whipped at Jackson May 14th, considerably augmented by reinforcements which the Confederate authorities had hurried forward, and was soon likely to become as formidable as the Vicksburg garrison itself by the daily accessions it was receiving. Grant detached such force as he could spare and sent it under command of General Sherman to confront this danger that threatened his rear,

in the meantime ordering forward such troops as were within his district in the north and calling on the government for reinforcements. From these resources Grant's army was soon increased to over 70,000 men, which placed him in a position to await events with reasonable equanimity. As has been noted, the Third Minnesota accompanied these reinforcements, and thereafter until the surrender performed efficient duty with the army confronting General Joe Johnston.

The Fourth and Fifth Regiments, with their brigades, were detached early in June for duty with an expedition sent up the Yazoo river, and at Satartia, Mississippi, on the 4th, and Mechanicsburg on the 5th, participated in actions of some importance which had for their purpose and secured the result of clearing that locality of a troublesome detachment of the enemy. The Fourth Regiment returned to the lines of investment, but the Fifth Regiment was sent with its brigade to Young's Point for duty in guarding the approach to Vicksburg from the Louisiana side of the river.

Apprehension was felt that an attempt might be made by the besieged enemy, aided by a force of Confederates that were assembling in the vicinity of Richmond, La., to escape by crossing to the peninsula opposite the city. In the performance of this new duty assigned it, the Fifth Regiment had a varied experience. On the 14th of June a movement was made against the enemy at Richmond, in which there was a spirited encounter, almost the entire action being limited to the operations of the Fifth Minnesota. The whole regiment was deployed as skirmishers covering a large part of the front of the advancing force. The enemy's skirmish line was encountered strongly posted a mile or more from Richmond. The regiment had become quite proficient in skirmish 569 duty, having had rather more than the average experience in that line of service, and in this instance, when ordered to charge while in this formation, made such a precipitate and vigorous onslaught that the entire skirmish line of the enemy was captured, uncovering the main force of the enemy, which had not yet made proper dispositions to receive our threatened attack. Our line of battle advancing rapidly caused the enemy to retire in much confusion, leaving evidence

in our hands in prisoners, baggage, and munitions, of the almost complete surprise of our rapid advance.

As an aid in repelling an attempt by the enemy to escape from Vicksburg by way of the river it was determined, if possible, to erect some protected batteries behind the levee along the river front of the peninsula opposite the city. For obvious reasons this work had to be prosecuted at night, and a large detail was each night required to aid in these operations. The enemy soon “caught on,” and one night when the Fifth Regiment was performing this duty the enemy opened fire with all his heavy guns that fringed the river front, concentrated upon the position held by the Fifth Regiment. The men crouched behind the levee, which at that point was high and wide, thinking, or at least hoping, that the rebels would soon tire of their somewhat random practice. But the enemy was evidently determined there should be no work done upon the batteries that night. The monstrous shot and shell from ponderous siege pieces plowed into the levee, covering us with earth, or screeched over our heads, cutting the trees in twain in our rear. The minutes grew into hours, and the hours lengthened interminably as the continuous fire was kept up, and during that whole mortal night, which it seemed would never end, the men lay there flattened out upon the ground behind that levee, none of them daring to hope they would be spared to see another dawn. Strange to say, but few men were injured. Most of the deadly missiles passed to the rear or buried themselves in the solid earth of the levee. Occasionally a shell would explode at a point from whence its fragments would wound some of the men, but the percentage of casualties to the amount of ammunition expended by the enemy was small. The horrors of that night, however, were sufficient to have made its victims prematurely gray, and I do not doubt that the thrills they experienced during its continuance remain in the consciousness of many of the men even to this day.

Further work upon these batteries was abandoned, but if they could have been completed they would have proven of but little use, as the garrison of Vicksburg was now starved and exhausted and ready to capitulate.

The survivors of Vicksburg have doubtless participated in many celebrations of our great national holiday since the war, but none of them have ever experienced the same degree of patriotic emotion that stirred their hearts when, on the morning of July 4th, 1863, it was announced to the army that Pemberton had surrendered and that Vicksburg was ours. Early in the day the Fifth Regiment was conveyed by steamer from its camp at Young's Point to the Vicksburg wharf, where they assumed for the day the freedom of the city. At the same time the Fourth Regiment marched with its division and at its head, from its position on the line of investment, into Vicksburg, where it was assigned, as a “post of honor” in recognition of its service in the campaign, to the duty of guarding for the time being the trophies of the capture. This event is fittingly commemorated by one of the beautiful battle scenes that now embellish the walls of the governor's room in the new capitol building of our state.

General John B. Sanborn, one of Minnesota's most distinguished soldiers, was conspicuously efficient in the performance of the difficult and arduous duties imposed upon him at various stages of the campaign. Though still colonel of the Fourth Regiment, he held the command of the First Brigade, Seventh Division, Seventeenth Army Corps, and for a time, during the illness of General Quinby, as senior colonel he commanded the Seventh Division.

In the complicated and perilous duties involved in the conduct of the Yazoo Pass expedition, General Sanborn performed signal service and won recognition for coolness, sagacity, and fertility of resource, in the extrication of his command from the maze of doubt and possible disaster in which that expedition became involved. In the battle of Champion Hills he gave evidence of the tactical ability that constituted one of his prominent qualifications for command. But in the assault of the 22nd of May his soldierly

instinct was exemplified in a marked degree, in the manner in which he maneuvered his brigade under difficulties of an exceptionally trying character, acting much of the time on his

FOURTH MINNESOTA INFANTRY ENTERING VICKSBURG. Copy o Painting in Governor's Reception Room, State Capitol.

571 own initiative, as he was compelled to do, and finally withdrawing his men after an almost successful assault, through a succession of perilous situations, from dangers that threatened to overwhelm him.

General Sanborn won his promotion long before it came, but a tardy sense of justice finally moved the government, that in many instances during our Civil War showed an unaccountable lack of appreciation for the patriotic service that saved its life.

The great success won at Vicksburg established General Grant's reputation upon an enduring basis. Thereafter he became the foremost military figure of the Civil War. It was an instance that notably exemplifies the saying that “nothing succeeds like success.” Had the campaign failed in its later stages, it would probably have made a record of disaster that makes one shudder to contemplate, and that would undoubtedly have materially prolonged the war. In his movement to the rear of Vicksburg via Grand Gulf, General Grant accepted the possible chance of bewildering the enemy by his bold strategy, and by celerity of action beating him in detail, at the same time risking what seemed to be the more probable chance of the enemy concentrating against and defeating him, with no line of retreat open to his army and no supplies within reach on which to subsist his men. Defeat under such conditions meant the capture or destruction of his army. General Sherman advised against the movement as in violation of the established rule of war, which prescribes that an army in an enemy's territory shall always maintain a base on which to fall back in case of disaster. The General in Chief at Washington (General Halleck) did not approve it, and sent Grant a peremptory order to abandon his plan and join General Banks at Port Hudson. This order was received by Grant after he had won

his series of victories and was closing in on Vicksburg. Military critics have repeatedly demonstrated as beyond doubt, in their view, that Grant ought to have been whipped to a finish and his army destroyed. In their bewilderment doubtless Pemberton and Johnston felt disgust in a degree equaled by the old Austrian general as he characterized Napoleon's tactics in Italy: “He ought to have been beaten over and over again, for who ever saw such tactics? The blockhead knows nothing of the rules of war. Today he is in our rear, tomorrow on our flanks, and 572 the next day again in our front. Such gross violations of the established principles of war are insufferable.”

In no campaign of the Civil War did Minnesota as a community have so vital an interest as in that of Vicksburg. When the rebellion blockaded the Mississippi river, Minnesota felt that the vital current in a main artery of her being had ceased to flow. She was restive under a sense of her isolation, until the barriers of that blockade were broken down; and a feeling of conscious rehabilitation, such as the invalid experiences when the bonds of his disease are broken, possessed all our people when President Lincoln proclaimed that “the Mississippi now flows unvexed to the sea.”

It is source of much gratification and pride to all our people to know that Minnesota was represented by her sons in that campaign to the extent of three regiments of infantry and a battery of artillery, and that they performed most effective work in all its main features. Minnesota paid her full share of the price this great achievement cost the country, and in recognition of the service of her sons in that most notable campaign, and as expressive of her gratitude and appreciation in that behalf, our state has recently erected an imposing memorial in the Vicksburg National Military Park.

Note .—General Sherman, in his Memoirs, gives the losses in men of the Vicksburg campaign as follows:

Union.

Killed 1,243

Wounded 7,095

Missing 535

Total 8,873

Confederate.

Surrendered at Vicksburg 32,000

Captured at Champion Hills 3,000

Captured at Big Black Bridge 2,000

Captured at Port Gibson 2,000

Captured with Loring 4,000

Killed and wounded 10,000

Stragglers 3,000

Total 56,000

The Fourth Minnesota lost 62 and the Fifth 18 in battle casualties during the campaign. The losses by death from other causes greatly exceeded these figures, especially in case of the Fifth Regiment, owing to its continuous service in the malarial localities in which its command was assigned to duty.

Vicksburg National Military Park

III. MINNESOTA IN THE RED RIVER EXPEDITION, 1864.*

* Read by Gen. L. F. Hubbard at the Monthly Meeting of the Executive Council, November 11, 1907.

The Red River Expedition, measured by its results, was a conspicuous failure. The judgment of history, while according to most of the active participants therein most honorable mention, must impartially record the fact that the campaign of March, April and May, 1864, along the line of the Red river in Louisiana, and the collateral movements in southern Arkansas, wholly failed to accomplish the purpose for which they were undertaken.

The evident military purpose of the expedition was to eliminate rebel occupancy, so far as its organized and armed forces were concerned, from the trans-Mississippi territory. The capture of Vicksburg and the surrender of Port Hudson in 1863 had wrested from the Confederates their last stronghold in the Mississippi valley, and had effectually cut the Confederacy in two. The Mississippi river was wholly in possession of the Union forces, though its navigation was somewhat interrupted by small raiding bodies of the enemy that would occasionally seek to establish the pretense of a temporary blockade. There was no considerable force of the enemy in an organized form west of the Mississippi, except that under command of General E. Kirby Smith, whose headquarters were at Shreveport, on the upper Red river, near the border of Texas and Arkansas. This army was somewhat scattered, occupying detached positions in various parts of Louisiana, Texas, and Arkansas. The destruction of this army, whose strength in the aggregate was variously estimated at from 30,000 to 40,000 men, was the objective purpose of the campaign.

General N. P. Banks, commanding the Department of the Gulf, though ambitious to identify himself with the general movement organized early in 1864 for an advance of the principal armies of the Union against the forces of the Confederacy, did not personally favor the idea of a campaign along the Red river. Secretary Stanton, however, believing that an elaborate campaign in the trans-Mississippi 574 states of the Confederacy would

give promise of a considerable contribution to the aggregate of results hoped for from the general movement all along the line, ordered Banks to mobilize his forces for offensive operations.

Banks had at New Orleans and along the Gulf coast an army of considerable proportions, including a large force of cavalry. General Frederick Steele, at Little Rock, Arkansas, had in that vicinity a force of several thousand men available for the field. The plan of the campaign contemplated the co-operation of these two armies, the former to move up the valley of the Red river, and the latter southwesterly, their common objective being Shreveport, Louisiana.

General Grant's active army, that had taken Vicksburg and achieved other successes in the Mississippi valley, had largely been transferred to other fields, a large part thereof under General Sherman reinforcing the army at Chattanooga, Tenn. There was yet a considerable body of troops belonging to General Sherman's command remaining at Vacksburg, but they were mostly under orders to join the army concentrating at Chattanooga. Before the last of this force had moved, Banks asked Sherman for the loan of 10,000 men for thirty days to aid in the proposed expedition. Sherman, of course, was loath to part even temporarily with any of the troops that had served with him so long, but upon Banks' promise to relieve and return them at the end of thirty days, he detached two divisions of the Sixteenth and a detachment of the Seventeenth Corps for this duty. Could he have known that he would see these troops no more during the war, he would hardly have consented to the arrangement.

On the 10th of March, 1864, this force of about 10,000 men, under command of General A. J. Smith, embarked aboard transports at Vicksburg and moved down the Mississippi river, escorted by Admiral Porter's fleet of ironclads to the mouth of the Red River; thence up that stream and into the Atchafalaya river, to Simmesport, La., where the troops were disembarked on the 12th of March.

With this command was the Fifth Minnesota Infantry, commanded by Major John C. Becht, Colonel L. F. Hubbard being in command of the brigade to which it was attached. The Fifth Regiment was the only Minnesota organization participating in

MAP Illustrating Campaigns Including Red River Expedition, Louisiana, and Camden Expedition, Arkansas .

575 what is specially denominated the Red River expedition; but in operations following the expedition, and as a natural sequel to its failure, as will appear, the Seventh, Ninth and Tenth Minnesota Regiments, together with the Fifth, bore an important part.

There were several detachments of rebel troops occupying points along the Red river, and in adjacent territory, the most easterly point being Fort De Russy, about forty miles from its mouth, a casemated battery that commanded and blockaded the river. This work had been constructed for the purpose of controlling navigation on the river, and especially with reference to repelling attack by the ironclads of the Union navy that dominated the waters of the lower Mississippi and its tributary streams. It was a formidable work of its class, and would doubtless have successfully resisted any probable attack upon its river front, but from its rear or land approach it proved to be quite vulnerable. The appearance of A. J. Smith's force on the Atchafalaya was the in the nature of a surprise to the enemy, and though thirty miles distant, at once suggested a probable movement on De Russy from the rear. The Confederate general, J. G. Walker, was at Fort De Russy with a division of troops, and General W. R. Scurry at a point favorable for observation near Simmesport, on the road leading to the fort, with a brigade. The latter was encountered on the morning of the 13th, but hastily retired and joined the larger force under Walker, who had advanced to a point on Bayou De Glaize, where he expected Smith would attempt to cross in his advance on De Russy.

Early on the morning of the 14th Smith maneuvered as if to force a passage at the point held by the enemy, but, hastily constructing a bridge across the bayou, some five miles east, from materials taken from a cotton gin and other structures in the vicinity, crossed the

bayou, thus interposing his force between Walker and the fort before the enemy realized what was going on. Holding sufficient force in his rear to “stand off” or otherwise take care of Walker, Smith pushed forward a division of his command under General J. A. Mower, which rapidly advanced on De Russy, reaching its vicinity about 6 p. m. on the 14th. As soon as the proper dispositions could be made, Smith ordered an assault on the fort, which was made with the impetuosity and a dash characteristic of the Sixteenth Army Corps, by its two leading brigades, 576 which, overwhelming all opposition, entered the work, capturing everything it contained within twenty minutes, with but slight loss to the assaulting force. The Fifth Minnesota was well to the front in this affair. The material results of this success were highly important, for, aside from the capture of the garrison and armament of the fort, about 350 prisoners and 10 heavy guns, was the removal of a formidable obstruction to the navigation of the Red river, the control of which was regarded by the Confederates as an essential factor in the scheme devised for the defense of the country. General Dick Taylor characterized the fall of De Russy as a disaster.

General Walker rapidly retired crestfallen into the interior of the country, and General A. J. Smith, leaving a force at De Russy to complete the destruction of the casemates, bomb-proofs and magazines of the fort, moved the two divisions of the Sixteenth Corps by steamers up Red river to Alexandria, where they arrived and occupied the place on the 16th of March, just as a considerable body of the enemy evacuated the town, leaving three pieces of artillery and a quantity of stores as evidence of their unceremonious exit.

General Smith's orders contemplated his junction with General Banks at Alexandria on the 17th of March. With characteristic promptitude Smith was on the ground one day ahead of time, but Banks, whose army was marching overland, had sent word that he would not be able to reach Alexandria until the 21st. Smith would not waste time waiting for anybody, and, having a suspicion that Banks might be delayed even beyond the 21st, he began to feel for the enemy, a formidable body of which he learned was concentrating under General Dick Taylor some miles west, on the road leading to Grand Ecore. General Mower, with the First Division, encountered General Taylor's advanced outpost, consisting

of a regiment of cavalry and a battery of artillery, occupying a strong position at Henderson Hill, at the crossing of a bayou, that seemed quite unassailable from any possible front approach. The broken topography of the locality and its densely wooded character discouraged any attempt to turn the position. Mower, always fertile in resource, learned from an inhabitant of the country, whom he had impressed as a guide, of a long disused trail that led by a circuitous route of several miles to the road in rear of 577 the point held by the enemy. The guide had not been along this trail in several years, and he felt sure that it had now become obstructed by undergrowth, fallen timber and otherwise, to an extent that would render it impracticable for present use. In the midst of a storm that had prevailed all day, Mower, just at night, led three of his regiments into the mazes of this trail, where they found conditions as forecasted by the guide. The Fifth Minnesota was ever ready to follow Mower wherever he would lead, but after emerging, about daylight, from the labyrinths they explored that night in the rain and pitchy darkness, the boys felt that the climax of confidence, as well as of endurance, had nearly been reached. A few of the men became lost in the wilderness and did not find the way out until late the next day. The success of the movement, however, justified the undertaking. The enemy was encouraged by the hesitating attitude of the force yet remaining in his front, in the feeling of assurance that his position was unassailable. He had no intimation of this turning movement until surprised from the rear at early dawn. Mower had captured a courier soon after reaching the road, with dispatches that gave him the enemy's countersign and enabled him to reach the vicinity of the rebel camp without creating alarm. The enemy's force was captured without much resistance or any loss, and the entire Confederate outfit of a regiment of cavalry and a battery of artillery was proudly escorted under guard to Alexandria on the 22nd of March.

General Banks arrived at Alexandria on the 25th of March, eight days beyond the date appointed, and thus a large fraction of the time for which Smith's troops had been loaned to him was practically lost. The “Army of the Gulf,” the designation borne by Banks' command proper, was composed of the Thirteenth and Nineteenth Army Corps, a column

of several thousand cavalry, and a few detachments of other troops, comprising altogether about 20,000 men. Most of these troops had been doing garrison duty at New Orleans and along the Gulf for many months. The regiments as a rule had full ranks, and all were handsomely equipped. Their arms were of the most approved pattern, and their uniforms were new. The full dress of the officers included all the elaborate adornment the regulations allowed, and altogether it was the proudest army in bearing and appearance that had graced 578 the valley of the Mississippi during the war. Quite in contrast was the appearance of the Sixteenth Army Corps. Since its service in the trenches at Vicksburg it had been hurried from one campaign or expedition to another so rapidly that it had been given little opportunity to exchange its soiled and much worn uniforms for fresh ones, and as a consequence its *tout ensemble* was positively shabby in comparison. Proud, however, in its *esprit de corps* , the veterans of Corinth, Vicksburg and a score of lesser campaigns did not quail under the deprecating glances of its much bedecked allies, and accepted rather as a compliment than otherwise the designation of “Smith's Guerrillas,” given them by the tony fellows of Banks' command.

The advance up the valley of the Red river from Alexandria began directly after the arrival of General Banks. General Smith's command, utilizing its fleet of transports, and escorted by Porter's ironclads, was conveyed by the river to Grand Ecore, where the Sixteenth Corps debarked April 3rd, the detachment of the Seventeenth Corps continuing up the river to the mouth of Loggy bayou, a point near Springfield Landing. On the 4th Hubbard's Brigade, with a detachment of cavalry, was sent against a force of the enemy posted at Compti, on the north bank of the river, a few miles above Grand Ecore. In this action the enemy was decisively defeated and driven in confusion into the swamps of the interior.

On the 7th Banks moved from Grand Ecore toward Shreveport, the Sixteenth Corps bringing up the rear. Banks had brought with him from New Orleans an enormous baggage and supply train. The men of the Sixteenth Corps declared that it was largely loaded with paper collars and linen dusters. It so encumbered the column that the Sixteenth Corps was not within supporting distance of the head of the column in the

advance from Grand Ecore. Dick Taylor, however, soon relieved him of a large part of this train, and thereafter the relations between the front and the rear of the column were not so distant, and perhaps not quite so strained.

During the after part of the day of the 8th of April, the second day's march from Grand Ecore, a vague rumor came along the line of march that General Banks was having a fight far to the front, but nothing definite was learned of its character until, as we 579 went into bivouac that night at Pleasant Hill, thirty-eight miles from Grand Ecore, the intelligence reached us that he had met the main body of the enemy, under General Dick Taylor, at Sabine Cross Roads, and that he had been decisively defeated, losing heavily in killed and wounded and in prisoners, artillery and transportation. Could it be possible, we thought, that the magnificent army that had so dazzled our vision as it marched past our camp at Alexandria had been so soon brought to grief, overwhelmed and defeated? But the worst reports were soon confirmed in all their disastrous details by fugitives from the front, and by Banks' routed column as it retired in broken fragments to Pleasant Hill, with Dick Taylor hard upon its heels.

The Sixteenth Corps was ordered into line of battle at 2 o'clock on the morning of the 9th to check the advance of the enemy and to perform such duty in connection therewith as events might impose. Old A. J. Smith, with his “Guerrillas” in line, presented an obstacle that Dick Taylor could not brush from his path. His pursuit was arrested, and Banks' demoralized troops, hastily reorganized so far as possible, were placed in position to co-operate in resisting a further advance of the enemy. Taylor, intoxicated by his previous success, and having been reinforced with two divisions, made his disposition for attacking our line, presuming, doubtless, that he would repeat his achievement of the preceding day. Deluded man! If he could have looked into old A. J. Smith's face as he sat astride that black charger, and into the eyes of that line of veterans that had never been whipped, he might have read his fate, and by a timely movement to the rear have saved himself a most painful experience.

There was some desultory fighting during the early part of the day without material result. About 4 p. m. the enemy advanced in force and made a vigorous attack. It was easily repulsed with considerable loss to the enemy. Taylor, evidently astonished, and perhaps indignant, now massed his troops and threw them vehemently against our lines determined to overwhelm them. Then followed some of the hardest fighting and bloodiest work, for the numbers engaged, of any battle of the war. Our troops stood as if rooted in their tracks. They could be killed, but they could not be driven. Our losses were heavy, but the slaughter of the 580 enemy was appalling. Again and again did Taylor assail our lines, and again and again was he repulsed. These repeated efforts and failures greatly weakened and disorganized the enemy, and made him finally an easy prey of General Smith, who now called into action a few regiments held in reserve, and, hurling his whole force with the energy of a cyclone against the now faltering foe, broke him in pieces. Defeated and utterly demoralized, Taylor's army retired in disorder toward Shreveport, leaving dead and wounded, prisoners and artillery in our hands.

The battle had extended into the night, and our exhausted army was in no condition to immediately pursue. We lay on the field where the fight ended, and sought such rest as was possible among the harrowing cries of the wounded as they were being gathered from the field where they fell. We were aroused at 2 o'clock on the morning of the 10th, expecting, of course, to be sent in pursuit of the fleeing enemy. To our astonishment, however, as we filed into the road, the head of the column was turned to the rear, and we commenced marching as if for dear life in the direction from whence we had come. What could this movement mean? Were we dreaming? Were we the defeated instead of the victorious army, and were we fleeing from a pursuing force? This was not the kind of strategy in which the old Sixteenth Corps had been educated, and we were dumb with amazement. All but old A. J. Smith—he was quite the reverse. His indignation could not be restrained, and his profane characterization of the cowardly business seemed to give the atmosphere a sulphurous taint all the way to Grand Ecore. We learned subsequently that although our army had achieved a great victory at Pleasant Hill, yet Banks found,

upon further investigation, that his New Orleans army had become so crippled by its defeat at Sabine Cross Roads that he was persuaded it was in no condition to aid in pursuing the enemy, and he therefore determined to retire to a defensive position and reorganize it. Smith protested. He offered to conduct the pursuit with the Sixteenth Corps alone. He could not consent to the disgrace of retreating from a victorious field; but Banks ordered the retreat, and Smith's ebullition of wrath thereat seemed to prematurely illumine the horizon as we marched to the rear on that early, frosty April morning. Dick Taylor, of course, expected to be vigorously pursued, and was therefore making a 581 forced march in the opposite direction. The situation presented the unique spectacle of two hostile armies running away from each other.*

* General A. J. Smith, in his official report, says: “About 12 o'clock on the night of the 9th I received orders from General Banks to have my command in readiness to move at 2 o'clock in the morning, and at that hour to withdraw them silently from the field and follow the Nineteenth Army Corps back to Grand Ecore, making such disposition of my troops and trains as would enable me to repel an attack on the rear of the column. I represented to him that the dead of my command were not buried, and that I had not the means of transporting my wounded; that many of the wounded had not yet been gathered in from the field; and asked of him permission to remain until noon the next day to give me an opportunity to bury my dead, and leave the wounded as well provided for as the circumstances would permit. I also urged the fact that General Thomas Kilby Smith's command, then thirty miles above us on transports in the river, would undoubtedly be captured and the transports lost if left to themselves. The permission to remain, however, was refused, and the order to move made peremptory. I therefore provided as well as possible for the wounded, left medical officers to attend them, and moved at the designated hour, following the Nineteenth Corps. We reached Grand Ecore on the evening of the 11th, no attack on the rear having been made by the enemy, and went into camp. On the evening of the 13th, nothing having been heard from a portion of our transports, save that they had been attacked with infantry and artillery on both sides of the river, I

marched up with two brigades of my command on the north bank of the river to help them through if possible. We reached Compti, twelve miles above, the same night, and met a portion of the fleet there, they having by energy, good judgment and rare good fortune succeeded in running the batteries and land forces of the enemy without the loss of a boat, though some were completely riddled with shot."

General Banks' disaster at Sabine Cross Roads was largely due to his wagon train. The cavalry division, under General A. L. Lee, and a detachment of the Thirteenth Corps, under General Ransom, holding the advance, encountered the enemy in force at the Cross Roads, about five miles from Mansfield, about 1 P. M ., April 8th. The enemy's attitude and movements indicated a purpose to resist Banks' further advance, and about 4 P. M ., General Banks having come up and assumed command, the enemy, in superior force, made a determined attack under which Banks' forces recoiled and were thrown into some disorder. In their attempt to retire to a position where a new line could be formed, and where they would meet reinforcements then on the way to the front, they found the way blocked by a confused mass of wagons and reserve artillery, which for a long distance occupied the road. This necessitated the abandonment of the artillery on its way to the rear, and presented a condition that spread demoralization throughout the entire force. Dick Taylor, of course, captured 582 everything on the road and large detachments of troops on either side of it in his vigorous and eager pursuit.*

* General Banks, in his official report, says: "The fatal consequences of this most incautious advance of trains and artillery were apparent upon the breaking of our lines in front of the enemy's position. Upon the retreat of the advance guard the enemy instantaneously enveloped the train of wagons, and it was impossible to withdraw the artillery in consequence of the pre-occupation of the ground by the wagons, and the encumbered roads impeded the movements of troops and caused many prisoners to fall into the hands of the enemy. The disasters of the day are to be attributed to the fatally

incautious advance of the large cavalry train and the surplus artillery, rather than to the strength of the enemy, his unexpected resistance, or the deficient valor of our troops."

Some five miles from the field of battle the Nineteenth Army Corps was met in position to check Taylor's advance. This corps in its turn was pressed so hard by the enemy that it retired to Pleasant Hill during the night of the 8th.

There was much controversy as to who was responsible for the presence of this wagon train so near the front. It was never settled in a satisfactory manner except to the boys of the Sixteenth Army Corps. The theory they established in the case was that Banks' tactics contemplated its use for skirmish and scouting duty.

The army retired to Grand Ecore, where it was ordered to entrench. The detachment of the Seventeenth Corps that had remained on the transports and had moved some thirty miles up the river from Grand Ecore, found itself, by reason of Banks' retreat in a perilous situation. Orders had, of course, been sent for its retirement down the river, but it was beset by the enemy in force on both its banks. General Smith, with two brigades, marched to its relief, and on the 14th the command reached Grand Ecore in good condition save the transports, which had been much damaged by the enemy's artillery.

If General Banks had at any times after his retirement to Grand Ecore entertained a determination to still pursue the purpose of the campaign, and thereby attempt to retrieve himself, the reappearance of the enemy in force in his vicinity seems to have persuaded him otherwise, for on the 22nd of April his army moved out of Grand Ecore on its farther retreat down the valley of the Red river toward Alexandria. The Sixteenth Corps, which had moved on the 20th to Natchitoches, a few miles southeast, was ordered to follow, and the duty assigned it to keep the enemy at 583 bay and protect Banks' rear. It had the rear of the column in the advance up the valley, and it held the rear in the retreat out of it; but in the latter movement it was the post of danger and of honor. Dick Taylor's army, now reorganized and largely reinforced, and its spirit revived by our retrograde movement,

assumed a vigorous offensive and harassed our rear at almost every step. We were often compelled to halt, from line of battle and drive him back, and thereby gain time for Banks to make headway down the valley. Before we fairly got away from Grand Ecore we repelled a fierce attack made by the enemy in force, and again at Cloutierville, a few miles east, a like movement of the enemy was met in like manner. Some part of Smith's command was constantly in line of battle during the five days and nights occupied in the retreat to Alexandria.

Banks met no enemy in his front except at Cane River, where he found the Crossing held by the enemy in considerable force, with batteries occupying a strong position on “Monett's Bluff,” which commanded the position. While maneuvering to flank this position, he sent an order for reinforcements from the Sixteenth Corps to come to his aid. General Mower with two brigades was about to be hurried to his relief, when General Smith, being himself then engaged in a spirited fight, concluded they might be needed where they were, and declined to comply with the order. In the meantime the flank movement referred to, aided by a front attack, had succeeded in dislodging the enemy. It was a sharp affair, entailing considerable loss to both sides.

We arrived at Alexandria on the 26th, nearly worn out by our continuous day and night duty in marching, skirmishing, and fighting. In all the operations herein noted, the Fifth Minnesota took an active part. From the battle at Pleasant Hill, where it held with Hubbard's Brigade the right of the line of the Sixteenth Army Corps, until it arrived at Alexandria, it was in every affair in which its division participated, and performed its full duty, as Minnesota soldiers always did throughout the war, with courage and efficiency.

General Frederick Steele's column of about 10,000 men, afterward somewhat reinforced, that moved from Little Rock, March 23rd, for the purpose of co-operating with General Banks, failed 584 to render any essential service in the campaigns, except to divert a considerable force of the enemy that would otherwise have confronted General Banks. Viewed from this standpoint, Steele's operations may not be regarded as wholly a failure,

but from any other point of view his efforts were wholly futile in promoting the objects of the campaign. Steele's experience was in its leading features similar to that of General Banks, except that he did not lose a general engagement. As he was to traverse a country that could furnish but a limited amount of supplies, he necessarily took with him a very large supply train, and, as in the case of General Banks, this proved his undoing. The most southerly point he reached in his advance toward Shreveport was Camden, Arkansas, on the Wichita river, about one hundred miles from Little Rock, which he reached on the 15th of April. He had several minor actions in his advance southward with detachments of the enemy under the general command of General Sterling Price, in which no material advantage resulted to either side. In his efforts while at Camden to renew his depleted supplies for further operations Steele sent out a large forage train on the 17th, consisting of some 225 wagons, with an escort of 1,500 men and four pieces of artillery. Near a point known as Poison Spring, about ten miles from Camden, this detachment was attacked by a superior force of the enemy under General S. B. Maxey, and the entire train with a large part of the escort was captured after a spirited fight. Again on the 25th a train of 240 wagons with a large escort, on its way from Camden to Pine Bluff for supplies, was attacked by a considerable force of the enemy under General J. F. Fagan at Marks Mills, on the Saline river, and met with a similar fate; all the wagons, about 1,000 prisoners, and a battery of artillery, falling into the hands of the enemy. This loss of nearly 500 wagons, with their animals, left Steele in a badly crippled condition for means of transportation. He had but about 150 wagons left, and these in large part rendered useless by reason of the condition of the animals, which had been on short rations of forage for many days.

About this time General Steele received definite advices of General Banks' disaster at Sabine Cross Roads, and of his subsequent retreat down the valley of the Red river. Communication between Banks and Steele had been much interrupted by the capture 585 of couriers that had been sent with dispatches, and each was in doubt much of the time as to the situation of the other in their respective fields of operation. General Steele, being persuaded that it was too late to aid Banks, even if he should be able to join him, and that

his situation at Camden was becoming desperate for want of supplies, and assuming also that he would soon be confronted by much of the force that had lately opposed Banks, considerable detachments having already appeared in his rear, concluded to abandon the campaign and retire to Little Rock. On the 26th, therefore, he commenced his retrograde movement, which soon assumed the aspect of a race between his army and the enemy for Little Rock. On the 29th he reached Jenkins Ferry on the Saline river, where, delayed in his crossing by reason of a swollen river and flooded approaches, he encountered the concentrated forces of the enemy with General Kirby Smith in command. Here he had a fight which assumed the proportions of a battle, which he practically won, and succeeded in crossing his army, though he was compelled to abandon in the muddy bottoms much of his remaining wagon train and many of his wounded on the field where he had fought. Steele won the race and reached Little Rock on the 2nd of May. Thus ended what is specially designated in the records of the war as the “Camden Expedition,” and which resulted in failure equal in character, if not in degree, to that of the main movement up the valley of the Red river.

Banks' army remained at Alexandria until the 13th of May, detained there by the gunboat and transport fleet, which was unable to pass the rapids in the river at that point, by reason of the recent shrinkage in the stage of water in the channel. It was feared for a time that the fleet must be destroyed as an alternative to its abandonment to the enemy, but the celebrated engineering feat conceived and superintended by Colonel Joseph Bailey, of Wisconsin, which, by means of wing dams, similar in principle to those utilized in recent years to improve the navigation of the upper Mississippi, resulted in giving a depth of water on the rapids sufficient to float the boats to the channel below. This delay gave the enemy time to concentrate in the vicinity, and opportunity to harass and attack our lines. Banks' supplies, particularly for his animals, became reduced to an extent that compelled the army to attack and drive the enemy back at several points, 586 for the sole purpose of occupying localities where corn and forage could be obtained with which to feed the mules. In the course of these operations we had sharp engagements at Moore's plantation

and on Bayous Robert and La Mourie, besides many skirmishes of which no record was made. Indeed, hardly a day passed that we were not in some form under fire.

On the 13th of May the last boat of the fleet passed the rapids, and on the morning of the 14th the army was put in motion for its final exodus from the Red River country. But our pathway was not to be a smooth one; indeed, we found it strewn with thorns. Dick Taylor, concluding this would be his last chance at us, evidently determined to make the most of it. He had possession of the roads on which me must march. He gave us but little trouble, however, except to harass the column and delay its movement by an occasional show of force, until we reached Marksville, a little French village some twenty-five miles from Alexandria, where we bivouacked on the night of the 15th. Here he made a stand and essayed to dispute our farther progress. Banks' entire army was called to arms before daybreak of the 16th to repel a threatened attack. It did not develop into anything serious, but daylight disclosed to us Taylor with a large force, strongly posted in a body of timber that crossed at right angles the road we must take in our farther progress out of the country. Clearly he was intending to fight. That had been our daily occupation for so long a time that we accepted the duty imposed by the condition presented as quite a matter of course. The approach to the enemy's position led across cleared and level ground that gave an unobstructed view from both flanks of the army. The deployment and advance of that line of battle on that clear and balmy May morning was a most inspiriting spectacle. The flashes of fire from the enemy's artillery and the bursting of shells along our front, together with the responsive volleys from our batteries, gave life and force to the picture. Viewed from the enemy's position, it must have been a most animated and impressive scene. We did not, however, linger to give Taylor time to photograph the picture, or rather, Taylor did not linger to improve the opportunity, for his line gave way under our determined onset, and the way was made clear for our columns to pass. Taylor retired on a road that led to the right, pressed moderately by a column 587 of our cavalry, while Banks, with full regulation step, made remarkably good time towards the Mississippi river.

There was no more enemy in front, so the Sixteenth Corps again brought up the rear. Taylor had not been so badly whipped but that he was able to give us trouble before we had completed the day's march, and, as we bivouacked at night, he saluted our camp with shell from his artillery. Before the column got fairly started on its march on the morning of the 17th, Taylor opened upon us with several guns at long range. A detachment of Smith's command was detailed to entertain him while the column was getting stretched out upon the road. It moved back in line of battle perhaps a mile, the enemy retiring to a favorable position, where he made a stand. A few rounds from our batteries, followed by a spirited charge, resulted in the route of the enemy. This maneuver had to be repeated twice during the day's march, but at night we reached Yellow bayou, near the Atchafalaya, across which Banks' forces were moving. We were required to remain here most of the following day, waiting for Banks, with his *impedimenta* , to get across the Atchafalaya river. About noon the irrepressible and omnipresent Dick Taylor came down upon us for a last salutation. Smith's entire command was ordered into line, and, with one of the prettiest fights of the campaign, we wound it up, if not in a “blaze of glory,” certainly with infinite credit to “Smith's Guerrillas.” Taylor was handsomely whipped and troubled us no more. We reached our fleet at the mouth of Red river on the 21st, and, embarking, lost no time in steaming northward. General Banks, with his army of the Gulf, marched down the bank of the Mississippi in the direction of New Orleans.

It goes without saying, that our contingent of the army was a happy lot of veterans when it realized that it was done with that expedition. We were proud of our contribution to its activities, but we felt that it was a military failure, and that all our hard campaigning, desperate fighting, and heavy losses had been for naught. We had won in fully a dozen fights and had been defeated in none, but their advantages were neutralized and their fruits wasted by mistakes made and misadventures occurring in the course of the campaign.

Much of the misfortune that Banks' army encountered was doubtless caused by delayed movements made necessary by the perils encountered by the naval contingent, in consequence of the unexpected low stage of water in the Red River. Predicating probabilities upon the experience of previous years, it was assumed that the channel of the river at that season would afford a depth of water sufficient to enable the fleet to move to Shreveport, without difficulty. Instead of meeting a rise in the water as the fleet proceeded up the river, as was expected, a reverse condition was encountered, the depth of the channel steadily shrinking from the time the boats entered the river.

One most unjust aspersion was sought to be cast upon General Banks by some of those who most severely criticised the conduct of the campaign. In some quarters it was characterized as a “cotton stealing expedition.” This was doubtless suggested by the efforts of the navy to collect cotton, of which there was a large amount in the country, and which was considered “good prize” by that arm of the service. Doubtless the navy received much money reward for its activity in this respect, but the army had no hand in this spcies of looting. General Banks' orders were comprehensive, specific and emphatic against all appropriation of cotton or other private property in the country by the army, except such as was required for its immediate use. Agents of the Treasury Department accompanied the expedition, under whose supervision cotton identified as belonging to the Confederacy was seized and shipped to New Orleans for account of the United States Government. There was some conflict between this authority and representatives of the navy, the latter being somewhat stimulated to eagerness by the prospect of liberal prize money promised by the then very high price of that staple.

It was the consensus of the best opinion among military authorities at the time, and critics of the campaign since have generally agreed, that had the advantage secured by the decisive victory at Pleasant Hill on the 9th of April been properly pressed, and the enemy vigorously followed up, Shreveport would have been taken and the campaign made a success. A large part of Kirby Smith's army was then in Arkansas opposing General

Steele's advance, and the force of the enemy with which Banks 589 would have had to deal was much less than that concentrated against him in his retreat out of the Red river valley. It is the firm belief of the writer that General A. J. Smith would have won the campaign if he had been in command of the expedition.

The action of Fitzhugh's Woods near Augusta, on White river, Arkansas, April 2, 1864, in which the Third Minnesota Infantry bore a principal part, may be noted as a collateral incident of General Steele's operations in Arkansas. Moving from Little Rock, on the 30th of March, by rail to Deval's Bluff, and thence by river to the vicinity of Augusta, 186 men of the Third Regiment, with a detachment of 45 men of the Eighth Missouri Cavalry, all under command of Colonel C. C. Andrews, encountered a force of 500 or more of the enemy, which they decisively defeated after a sharp and somewhat protracted action, in which the Third Regiment lost 7 killed, 16 wounded, and 4 missing. The participants in this affair were much commended for their gallant action, which resulted in an effective disposition of a troublesome detachment of the enemy that had for a time maintained a reign of terror in that locality, in its efforts to enforce conscription for the Confederate Army.

While the Sixth Minnesota did not directly participate in any of the more active operations under consideration, its presence and experience at Helena, Ark., a point contiguous to the territory in which important details of such operations transpired, may properly be referred to in this connection. The service of the Sixth Regiment was important, and its sacrifice in the performance thereof probably much greater than it would have suffered if it had been exposed to all the vicissitudes of an active campaign. Helena was a point important to be held as affecting the navigation of the Mississippi river; it was, however, perhaps the most unhealthy locality that could be found in all the swampy and malaria-infected regions on the lower Mississippi. The regiment had done valiant service in the Indian campaigns on the Northwestern frontier, and the men had become seasoned veterans. When it left Minnesota it was one of the most stalwart organizations that had gone from the state, and it reached Helena, June 23, 1864, with full ranks, 940 strong, and in all respects in splendid condition. It was retained at Helena until November 4th

following, 590 a period of but a little over four months, during which 72 of its members died and 600 were sent to Northern hospitals, victims of the malarial poisons of the locality. On August 7th, barely six weeks after its arrival at Helena, there were but 7 officers and 178 men reported fit for duty. The regiment was engaged in an action during the summer in repelling a raiding attack on the post it occupied, and in an expedition in July up the White river. When relieved from its living tomb, the Sixth Regiment was transferred to St. Louis, where it performed provost duty for a time.

The abandonment of the Red River country by General Banks and the precipitate retreat of General Steele from Camden to Little Rock created a condition that warranted the claim, at once asserted by the Confederates, that they had won a substantial victory and expelled the Union forces from the country with discredit and loss. The enemy was now encouraged to assume the aggressive, and evidence of his activity was at once manifest by efforts to obstruct the navigation of the Mississippi river. Much trouble followed, and many transports with valuable property were either captured or destroyed. Indeed, for a time, it became the chief duty of the naval force to act as convoys for transports, patrol the river, and endeavor to dislodge from its banks detachments of the enemy engaged in this service.

In its progress up the river on its way to Memphis, where it had been ordered to rendezvous, the Sixteenth Army Corps was made to realize this condition. Near Lake Village on Lake Chicot, Arkansas, our fleet found the river successfully blockaded. The Confederate General Marmaduke, with a considerable force and some heavy guns, held a strong and protected position from which it was apparent he must be dislodged before our fleet could progress farther. Two brigades of infantry were landed and an engagement characterized by much stubbornness on the part of the enemy followed on the 6th of June, 1864. Marmaduke's position was protected from the land approach by a bayou very difficult to cross, and to effect a crossing necessitated a prolonged exposure to the enemy's fire. In the difficult operations involved in this effort Hubbard's Brigade had 63 men killed and wounded, 17 from the Fifth Minnesota; but the crossing was accomplished,

and the 591 enemy driven with precipitation from the position. The fleet proceeded to Memphis, where it arrived on the 10th of June.

The Sixteenth Corps expected, and indeed was under orders, to join Sherman at Chattanooga; but the activity of the Confederates just at this time in northern Mississippi, and the portent of probable enterprises threatened by the Confederates in Arkansas, not only compelled the retention of Smith's Corps in the West, but made necessary the sending of reinforcements to Memphis. Among the latter were included the Seventh, Ninth, and Tenth Minnesota Infantry.

As conditions developed, the situation became more immediately pressing in northern Mississippi, where the Confederate Generals Forrest and S. D. Lee were seeking to create a diversion against Sherman, then engaged in his Atlanta campaign. Several expeditions were successively organized and sent against these enterprising Confederates, notable among which was one under General S. D. Sturgis, which came to inexpressible grief at the battle of Brice Cross Roads, near Guntown, Miss., June 10th, in which the Ninth Minnesota greatly distinguished itself, though suffering severely as the price of its prowess. The Ninth practically saved the army, as stated in the official report of its division commander, in repelling a vicious attack at the close of the battle, and while acting as rear guard in the retreat, much delaying by its persistence and gallantry the eager pursuit of the enemy.*

* Col. W. L. McMillan, commanding the division to which the Ninth Regiment was attached, in his official report of the battle of Brice Cross Roads, said: “My extreme right, after a sharp and bloody contest, was forced back, and I was obliged to throw in the only regiment I had in reserve to drive the enemy back and re-establish my line at that point. This work was gallantly performed by the Ninth Minnesota, under the heroic Marsh, and I desire here to express to him and his brave men my thanks for their firmness and bravery, which alone saved the army at that critical moment from utter defeat and probable capture.”

A second expedition under General A. J. Smith, at Tupelo, July 14th, in which the Seventh, Ninth, Tenth, and a detachment of the Fifth,† participated, met a very different fate, and, by the achievement of a decided victory, largely retrieved the disaster at Guntown. In this battle the brave and soldierly Colonel Alexander Wilkin of the Ninth Minnesota, then in command of a

† Non-veterans under command of Capt. T. J. Sheehan. The re-enlisted men were on their veteran furlough at this time.

592 brigade, was killed in the height of the action. Colonel Wilkin was peculiarly endowed with ideal personal and soldierly qualities, and was highly regarded by all to whom his great merits became known. His regiment was inconsolable at his loss, and, following so soon the disaster at Guntown, it seemed an affliction especially hard to bear.

A third attempt to clear the country of the troublesome enemy was made in August, and became known as the “Oxford raid,” in which the Fifth, Seventh, Ninth and Tenth Minnesota Regiments participated, and which had the effect of further quieting conditions in that region.*

* In the battle of Brice Cross Roads the Ninth Regiment lost 9 killed, 33 wounded, and 244 captured. Of the latter, 119 died in the Andersonville (Ga.) prison.

At Tupelo the Seventh Regiment lost 10 killed and 52 wounded; Ninth, 2 killed and 5 wounded; and the Tenth, 1 killed and 12 wounded.

The Confederate General E. Kirby Smith in the meantime had organized his forces in Louisiana and Arkansas for offensive operations of a formidable character. A large force under General Dick Taylor was preparing, late in August, to cross the Mississippi at a point near Gaines Landing, Arkansas, from whence it could move to the relief of Mobile, which was being threatened by General Canby from New Orleans, or to the aid of General Johnston, who was opposing Sherman in Georgia. At Camden, in Arkansas, a

Confederate force of 12,000 cavalry under General Sterling Price had been concentrated for the invasion of Missouri. General Taylor met a serious obstacle to his proposed crossing of the Mississippi in the practical revolt of a large proportion of his men, who objected to being so widely separated from their home states west of the river. This condition, growing more serious as time passed, together with the increasing difficulty of effecting a crossing in the face of Admiral Porter's fleet of ironclads, resulted, after much preparation and earnest effort, in an abandonment of the project; but Price started northward from Camden, August 28th with the ambitious purpose of annexing the State of Missouri to the Southern Confederacy. This would seem upon superficial view to have been an altogether chimerical project, but there were features of the situation that warranted Price in entertaining a hope of precipitating conditions in Missouri that would bring infinite trouble to the Union cause. The pronounced 593 failure of Banks and Steele in their campaigns in Louisiana and Arkansas had stimulated to great activity the disloyal element in Missouri, which was large, and which had prepared itself to cooperate with Price in an organized form upon his invasion of the state. Price had been assured that the mass of the people would rally to his standard; that his army would be doubled, trebled, quadrupled by enthusiastic recruits as he marched through Missouri, and that his presence upon her soil would create an enthusiasm, for the cause of the Confederacy that would sweep everything before it. General Rosecrans, then in command in Missouri, had been required to send every regiment he could spare to reinforce Sherman in his Atlanta campaign; hence he was bare of disposable troops, except a few regiments of recently organized militia and a limited force of cavalry occupying widely separated posts throughout the state. Price therefore had reason to believe that by celerity of movement he could overcome any probable opposition he might encounter. His purpose was first to capture and occupy St. Louis, appropriate or destroy its arsenal and depot of supplies, then occupy Jefferson City, the capital of the state, assemble the legislature, which was largely in sympathy with his purposes, and have hurriedly passed an ordinance of secession. The Confederate pretender to the governorship of the state, Thomas C. Reynolds, traveled with Price's headquarters; hence was readily

at hand for such executive action as might be required to promote the program. He had prepared proclamations appealing to the people of Missouri, which from his point of view, it seemed, could not fail to create a general revolt of the masses against their so-called “oppressors,”—an ambitious project surely, but which not only failed to materialize in most of its essential features, but reacted like a boomerang in the crushing of its enterprising projector.

The adverse conditions in northern Mississippi having become somewhat relieved, General A. J. Smith had been ordered to join Sherman with the Sixteenth Army Corps. Moving via the Mississippi to Cairo, Smith left Memphis early in September with two divisions, leaving his first division, under General Mower, to follow as transportation should be provided. While Mower was preparing to embark, Price's formidable movement from Camden 594 had developed, and a hurried call for help came from Arkansas. Mower's Division was diverted thence, and, sailing on the 2nd of September, moved down the Mississippi into White river and debarked at Deval's Bluff. Marching thence towards Little Rock, it was halted at Brownsville, Arkansas, on the 9th. With this command were the Fifth, Seventh, Ninth and Tenth Minnesota Regiments. When Smith reached Cairo, on the 6th, he was there met by orders to await developments in Missouri before proceeding farther.

Price's early movements were rather deliberate and somewhat confusing, his immediate objective not having been developed, and he maneuvered in a way to create much doubt as to the route he intended to take in his movement northward. This condition detained Mower at Brownsville until the 17th of September. On that date was begun the long chase after General Price and his army, over the mountains and through the swamps of Arkansas, into and across the state of Missouri, during which the Minnesota troops marched nearly 800 miles.* This was, all things considered, the hardest campaign throughout their experience during the Civil War. I doubt if any other campaign of the war equalled it for continuously severe and exacting service. The route in Arkansas lay through almost impenetrable cypress swamps, and over obscure mountain roads, washed by

continuous rains down to their rocky beds. Severe storms prevailed much of the time, and the men often lay down in the mud at night, drenched, sore, weary and hungry, feeling that they had reached the limit of endurance. It was developed, after the command had been out a few days, that its supply train was largely loaded with mouldy and decayed hard bread, refuse stores issued by the Commissary at Little Rock. In consequence of this the men were early put upon half rations, then one-third, and much of that unfit to eat. Many reached such a famished condition that they sought for nourishment in the bark of sassafras boughs and the beech leaves which the forest trees afforded. The country was largely uninhabited, and hence afforded nothing upon which an army could subsist. Occasionally a rude cabin would be seen occupied by a cadaverous native, who

* Brownsville, Arkansas, to Cape Girardeau, 335 miles; La Mine, Mo., to Kansas state line, 175 miles; Kansas line to St. Louis, Mo., 285 miles; total, 795 miles.

595 subsisted by trapping in the mountains, and whose wonder was aroused as the fact was revealed to him by the evidence the appearance of the troops gave, that there was a war in progress in the country. After crossing the mountains the army was turned eastward and reached Cape Girardeau, on the Mississippi river, October 5th.

Meantime General A. J. Smith had landed his force below St. Louis and moved to De Soto, Missouri, thus interposing his force between Price and the City of St. Louis. This movement, in combination with other dispositions, saved St. Louis from attack, though Price's advance reached a point within one day's march of the city. Price turned to the left and moved rapidly westward, passing to the south of the capital of Missouri, after making a strong demonstration against that city. The promised rally to his standards proved disappointing to a degree that caused him to abandon as impracticable his scheme for assembling the legislature of the state.

Mower's command was conveyed by water to Jefferson City and thence by rail a few miles to La Mine, Missouri, where he rejoined General Smith and the balance of the Sixteenth Corps, and from whence the chase was taken up and continued by forced marches

through Sedalia, Lexington, and Independence, to the Little Blue river near the Kansas state line. Here Price was overtaken, October 23rd, by a considerable body of cavalry, under Generals Pleasanton, Curtis, and Blunt, and given a blow which, in his exhausted condition, extinguished all remaining hope of his obtaining a foothold in Missouri. In his retreat southward two days later, at the crossing of the Little Osage, the Union cavalry again engaged and defeated Price's already broken force, the remnants of which were thereafter pursued until they passed beyond the southern boundary of the state and into the mountains of Arkansas. In this pursuit of Price, General John B. Sanborn, with a brigade of cavalry, performed important, protracted and effective service.

In this fierce chase of the enemy the infantry, while constantly gaining on their quarry, failed to quite overtake it, though making most extraordinary marches, some days exceeding forty miles. It was demonstrated many times during the war that in a long 596 stretch infantry could outmarch cavalry, but Price, having a long start ahead and being able to largely renew his mounts in his course through Missouri, was able to avoid a collision with the Sixteenth Army Corps; hence in this long pursuit we were deprived of the relaxation that it seemed a fight would really have afforded us. After Price's encounter with Pleasanton and Curtis, and the practical dispersal of his army, further pursuit by the infantry would, of course, be futile, and we were therefore ordered, after crossing the boundary into Kansas, to return to the Mississippi river. Another long march of nearly 300 miles was before us, on which we had but fairly started when hurry orders came for us to join Thomas in Tennessee.

The return march was without special incident, except that its forced character in much bad weather imposed an excessively severe strain upon the men. On November 3rd, in the vicinity of Sedalia, we encountered a storm of exceptional violence, during which a march of twenty miles was made through a foot of snow in a temperature below freezing with a blizzard blowing from the north. Such weather conditions were unprecedented for that latitude and the season, but the Minnesota boys accepted the situation with the philosophic reflection that this was the only kind of weather they had not previously

encountered on the campaign, and was, therefore, necessary to complete their physical discomfort and fill their cup of misery to the brim. We reached St. Louis November 15th in a condition that perhaps may be imagined, but which was too discreditable in its ensemble to undertake to describe. Here we were given a fresh outfit, and, after a brief respite, were sent in haste to reinforce Thomas, where the Sixteenth Army Corps, and especially the Fifth, Seventh, Ninth and Tenth Minnesota Regiments, won imperishable glory on the 15th and 16th of December following in the great and decisive battle of Nashville.*

* General W. S. Rosecrans, in his official report of the campaign, said: “Maj.-Gen. A. J. Smith deserves thanks for promptitude, energy and perseverance in all his movements, and for good judgment displayed in his campaign. Nor must I omit a tribute of admiration for those brave and true soldiers who, under Mower, followed Price from Arkansas, marching 300 miles in 18 days, and, after going by boat from Cape Giradeau to Jefferson City, again resumed the march after him, making another march of 462 miles before they embarked for Nashville to take part in the not doubtful contest before that city for the mastery of middle Tennessee.”

Battle Fields in Front of Nashville, Tenn., where the Union Army under Gen. Geo. H. Thomas defeated the Confederate Army under Gen. J. B. Hood. Dec. 15 th & 16 th 1864. From official Maps in U. S. War Dep .

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IV. MINNESOTA IN THE BATTLES OF NASHVILLE, DECEMBER 15 and 16, 1864.*

* Read by Gen. L. F. Hubbard before the Minnesota Commandery of the Loyal Legion, March 14, 1905, and presented to this Society with the preceding and following papers.

This paper has been prepared in response to the solicitation of many old veterans of our state, survivors of the regiments that participated in the battles of Nashville, Tennessee, in December, 1864, who have felt that a record somewhat more in detail than any yet furnished should be presented of the part borne by Minnesota troops in that important

event of the Civil War. While I have been myself impressed in this behalf, I have hoped the service might come from hands more able to do the subject justice.

Minnesota had more of her troops represented, and gave more of her sons as a sacrifice to the country, in the battle of Nashville than in any other battle of the war. Four of her regiments were prominently identified with the notable achievements of that memorable victory of the Union arms, and all won much credit for the young commonwealth that sent them forth. It is surely fitting that these facts be commemorated in the records of this Commandery and of the Minnesota Historical Society.

It is the purpose of this paper to deal specially with the record of Minnesota organizations in the battle of Nashville, and it will not seek to present a comprehensive description of the battle itself, or of the campaign of which it was the decisive culmination; yet it will be necessary, in order to convey an intelligent understanding of the conditions under which the battle was fought, and of the highly important character of the issues immediately involved, to state briefly the military situation in the Central West during the autumn months of 1864.

The objects of General Sherman's advance from Chattanooga to Atlanta had been accomplished by his successive defeats of the Confederate forces in that memorable campaign, and by his capture and occupation of the city of Atlanta, September 2d, 1864. 598 While Sherman was making his arrangements preliminary to his next campaign, which contemplated the movement of his army on its celebrated march through Georgia to the sea, the confederate army that had recently opposed him, now commanded by General J. B. Hood, remained for a time somewhat inactive, while its shattered units were being reorganized and to some extent recruited. Before Sherman was ready to cut loose from his base, however, Hood resumed active operations. Sherman's long line of railroad communications presented a vulnerable feature of the situation, and Hood showed much enterprise in his efforts to make Sherman's position at Atlanta precarious, or at least uncomfortable, by frequent raids in his rear and attacks upon, and the occasional capture

of, small garrisons in occupation of protecting outposts. While making these forays Hood steadily moved towards the Tennessee river, his purpose, as it developed, being to draw Sherman away from Atlanta in pursuit, hoping thus to neutralize or defeat the objects gained by Sherman in his recent great campaign.

The situation presented puzzling problems of a serious nature. If Sherman was to follow Hood with an adequate force, he must greatly weaken his position at Atlanta, secured at so great a cost, as he would doubtless be drawn away from within supporting distance of any force he might leave in occupation of that place. The alternative to this was to abandon his base and its communications and enter upon his contemplated campaign, leaving Hood to be looked after by such forces as could be hurriedly assembled by Gen. George H. Thomas, who had recently been assigned to command the Department of the Cumberland with headquarters at Nashville, Tennessee. Sherman obtained, as is well known, the reluctant consent of the authorities at army headquarters to adopt the latter plan, and after detaching the Fourth and Twenty-third Army Corps and some scattered detachments of other troops then on outpost duty to report to Thomas, he proceeded in his purpose of “smashing things to the sea.”

Sherman abandoned Atlanta on the 15th of November, and General Hood, who had concentrated his army in the vicinity of Florence on the Tennessee river, commenced his advance northward two days later. Thus the two armies that had so recently contended for supremacy in Georgia were making rapid movements 599 in opposite directions, away from the scenes of their recent victories and defeats, Sherman bound for the Atlantic seacoast, and Hood's objective being the Ohio river. While Hood had been manneuvering to entice Sherman away from Atlanta, he had in the meantime called to his aid every resource left to the Confederates in the section of country in which he was operating. When he began his movement north from Florence, he had a compact army of about 55,000 men, including 12,000 cavalry, the latter composed principally of General Forrest's

force, which for a long time had dominated a large part of the valley of the Tennessee river.

Thomas had assembled the troops assigned him by Sherman and disposed of them in a manner to watch Hood's movements and retard his advance. The Fourth and Twenty-third Corps had been seriously depleted in the Atlanta campaign, and now numbered together about 22,000 men. To this force were added some detached bodies of troops that had occupied outposts in Tennessee and Georgia, and a few new regiments that had recently been sent to Nashville from the North. The aggregate of the forces under General Thomas' command at this time was much less than those of Hood, and even a considerable part of these were not available for the immediate emergency, as outlying fortified positions, of which Murfreesboro was the most important, could not safely be abandoned.

Such reinforcements as were available in the West were being hurried to Thomas' aid, the most considerable force of this character being two divisions of the Sixteenth Army Corps under Gen. A. J. Smith, numbering about 10,000 men, which had recently concluded a hard campaign in Arkansas and Missouri. Attached to this command were the Fifth, Seventh, Ninth, and Tenth Minnesota Infantry. This force, which was designated in General Thomas' reorganized army as a detachment of the Army of the Tennessee, was hurriedly forwarded from St. Louis via the Mississippi, Ohio and Cumberland rivers, its vanguard arriving in Nashville on the first day of December, 1864. The Minnesota regiments were attached to the First Division of this detachment, which was commanded by Gen. John McArthur. The division consisted of three brigades. The First brigade, composed of the Tenth Minnesota, Seventy-second and Ninety-fifth Ohio, the One 600 hundred fourteenth Illinois and Ninety-third Indiana regiments, and an Illinois battery, was commanded by Col. W. L. McMillan of the Ninety-fifth Ohio. The Second brigade, composed of the Fifth and Ninth Minnesota, the Eleventh Missouri and Eighth Wisconsin regiments, and the Second Iowa battery, was commanded by Col. L. F. Hubbard of the Fifth Minnesota. The Third brigade, composed of the Seventh Minnesota, Twelfth and Thirty-fifth Iowa and Thirty-third Missouri regiments, and the Second Missouri battery,

was commanded by Col. S. G. Hill of the Thirty-fifth Iowa. General Smith's two divisions were given positions on the right of the line of defense with which General Thomas had enveloped Nashville, and at once proceeded to entrench their front.

Pending these dispositions, Hood had steadily advance northword without encountering serious opposition, until he reached the vicinity of Harpeth river. Gen. J. M. Schofield and Gen. D. S. Stanley, in command respectively of the Twenty-third and Fourth Army Corps, had united their forces at Pulaski, Tennessee, both now being under command of General Schofield as the senior officer. This force retired toward Nashville on roads parallel with Hood's advance, and reached Franklin on the Harpeth river, where the roads converged, ahead of Hood, where the latter evidently intended to cross that stream. General Thomas had ordered Schofield to dispute Hood's passage of the Harpeth, and accordingly dispositions were made for this purpose. Schofield hurriedly entrenched his position, which was immediately attacked by Hood. Here occurred, on the 30th of November, one of the most desperate and bloody encounters for the numbers engaged that is recorded in the history of the rebellion. Hood made several desperate assaults on Schofield's entrenched lines, and suffered much punishment in their repeated repulse. Schofield's losses were also considerable, but he accomplished the purpose of holding Hood's army at bay for the moment, and gave Thomas more time, which was most essential, to enable him to strengthen his position at Nashville and gather the reinforcements within his reach. Schofield leisurely retired to Nashville, followed by Hood, who soon recovered his wonted audacity sufficiently to present a bold and defiant front upon his arrival before Thomas' defenses, December 4th, 1864.

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General Thomas had strengthened his position at Nashville and was in condition to make a successful defensive fight, but he felt that he was hardly ready, with his inferior numbers, to take the offensive, and hence awaited Hood's further movements, while he improved the time in making more effective the army he had created out of the odds and ends that had been gathered at Nashville. Thomas' army in Nashville, as has been stated, was inferior

to that of the enemy in point of numbers, and he was particularly deficient in calvary. He had 5,000 men at Murfreesboro, a position it was important to hold, and considerable detachments were employed elsewhere, principally in protection of his communications to the rear.

The authorities at Washington and at the headquarters of the army became very impatient at the delay in moving against the enemy, and sent Thomas many peremptory orders to attack Hood; and in his failure to promptly respond as directed, it was determined to relieve him from his command. First Schofield was designated to supersede him; then Logan was sent west for the purpose, who got as far as Louisville, Kentucky; and finally General Grant himself started from City Point, Va., but received news in Washington that arrested his further progress west. In each case the orders were held in abeyance as advices came from Thomas in explanation of his delay. To make this condition more appearent, and also to disclose the great importance of the situation as it impressed the Government and the country at the time, I here quote some of the more important dispatches that passed between Washington and City Point and Nashville, bearing upon this phase of the situation.

Washington, Dec. 2, 1864.

Lieut. Gen. Grant, City Point:

The President feels solicitous about the disposition of Thomas to lay in fortifications for an indefinite period, “until Wilson gets his equipments.” This looks like the McClellan and Rosecrans strategy of do nothing and let the enemy raid the country. The President wishes you to consider the matter.

Edwin M. Stanton , *Secretary of War* .

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City Point, Va., Dec. 2, 1864.

Maj. Gen. George H. Thomas, Nashville:

If Hood is permitted to remain quietly about Nashville, we will lose all the roads back to Chattanooga and possibly have to abandon the line of the Tennessee river. Should he attack you it is all well, but if he does not you should attack him before he fortifies.

U. S. Grant , *Lieut. General* .

City Point, Va., Dec. 2, 1864.

Maj. Gen. George H. Thomas, Nashville:

After the repulse of Hood at Franklin, it looks to me that instead of falling back to Nashville we should have taken the offensive against the enemy, but at this distance may err as to the method of dealing with the enemy. You will suffer incalculable injury upon your railroads if Hood is not speedily disposed of. Put forth, therefore, every possible exertion to attain this end. Should you get him to retreating, give him no peace.

U. S. Grant , *Lieut. General* .

Nashville, Tenn., Dec. 2, 1864.

Gen. U. S. Grant, City Point, Va.:

Your two telegrams of 11 A. M. and 1:30 P. M. to-day received. At the time Hood was whipped at Franklin, I had at this place but about 5,000 men of General Smith's command, which, added to the force under General Schofield, would not have given me more than 25,000 men. Besides, Gen. Schofield felt convinced that he could not hold the enemy at Franklin until the 5,000 could reach him. As Gen. Wilson's cavalry force numbered only about one-fourth that of Forrest, I thought it best to draw the troops back to Nashville and await the arrival of the remainder of Gen. Smith's force, and also a force of about 5,000 commanded by Gen. Steedman, which I ordered up from Chattanooga. The division of

Gen. Smith arrived yesterday morning, and Gen. Steedman's troops arrived last night. I have infantry enough to assume the offensive if I had more cavalry, and will take the field anyhow as soon as the remainder of Gen. McCook's division of cavalry reaches here, which I hope it will in two or three days. We can neither get reinforcements nor equipments at this great distance from the north very easily, and it must be remembered that my command was made up of the two weakest corps of Gen. Sherman's army, and all the dismounted cavalry except one brigade; and the task of reorganizing and equipping has met with many delays, which have enabled Hood to take advantage of my crippled condition. I earnestly hope, however, in a few days more I shall be able to give him a fight.

George H. Thomas , *Major General Commanding* .

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City Point, Va., Dec. 6, 1864.

Maj. Gen. George H. Thomas, Nashville:

Attack Hood at once and wait no longer for your cavalry. There is great danger in delay resulting in a campaign back to the Ohio.

U. S. Grant , *Lieut. General* .

Nashville, Dec. 6, 1864.

Lieut. Gen. U. S. Grant, City Point:

Your dispatch of 4 P. M. this day received. I will make the necessary dispositions and attack Hood at once, agreeably to your orders, though I believe it will be hazardous with the small force of cavalry now at my service.

George H. Thomas , *Major General Commanding* .

Washington, Dec. 7, 1864.

Lieut. Gen. Grant:

Thomas seems unwilling to attack because it is hazardous, as if all war was anything but hazardous. If he waits for Wilson to get ready, Gabriel will be blowing his last horn.

Edwin M. Stanton .

City Point, Va., Dec. 8, 1864.

Maj. Gen. Halleck, Washington:

Please direct General Dodge to send all the troops he can spare to General Thomas * * * I will submit whether it is not advisable to call on Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, for 60,000 men for thirty days. If Thomas has not struck yet he ought to be ordered to hand over his command to Schofield. There is no better man to repel an attack than Thomas; but I fear he is too cautions to take the initiative.

U. S. Grant , *Lieut. General* .

Washington, Dec. 8, 1864.

Lieut. Gen. Grant, City Point:

If you wish General Thomas relieved, give the order. No one here I think will interfere. The responsibility, however, will be yours, as no one here, so far as I am informed, wishes General Thomas removed.

H. W. Halleck , *Chief of Staff* .

City Point, Va., Dec. 8, 1864.

Maj. Gen. Halleck, Washington:

Your dispatch of 9 A. M. just received. I want General Thomas reminded of the importance of immediate action. I sent him a dispatch this evening, which will probably urge him on. I would not say relieve him until I hear further from him.

U. S. Grant , *Lieut. General* .

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Nashville, Tenn., Dec. 8, 1864.

Lieut. Gen. Grant, City Point:

Your dispatch of 7:30 P. M. is just received. I can only say in further extenuation why I have not attacked Hood, that I could not concentrate my troops and get their transportation in order in shorter time than it has been done, and am satisfied I have made every effort that was possible to complete the task.

George H. Thomas , *Major General Commanding* .

City Point, Va., Dec. 9, 1864.

Maj. Gen. Halleck, Washington:

Dispatch of 8 P. M. last evening from Nashville shows * * * no attack yet made by Thomas. Please telegraph orders relieving him and placing Schofield in command. * * *

U. S. Grant , *Lieut. General* .

War Department, Adjutant General's Office, Washington, Dec. 9, 1864. General Orders No…

The following dispatch having been received from Lieut. General Grant, viz.: “Please telegraph orders relieving him (General Thomas) at once and placing General Schofield in command,” the President orders:

I. That Major General Schofield relieve at once Major General G. H. Thomas in command of the Department and Army of the Cumberland.

II. General Thomas will turn over to General Schofield all orders and instructions received by him since the battle of Franklin.

E. D. Townsend , *Assistant Adjutant General* .

Nashville, Tenn., Dec. 9, 1864.

Lieut. Gen. U. S. Grant, City Point:

Your dispatch of 8:30 P. M. of the 8th is just received. I had nearly completed my preparations to attack the enemy tomorrow morning, but a terrible storm of freezing rain has come on today, which will make it impossible for our men to fight to any advantage. I am therefore compelled to wait for the storm to break. * * * I can only say I have done all in my power to prepare, and if you should deem it necessary to relieve me I shall submit without a murmur.

George H. Thomas , *Major General Commanding* .

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Washington, D. C., Dec. 9, 1864.

Lieut. Gen. Grant, City Point:

Orders relieving General Thomas had been made out when his telegram of this P. M. was received. If you still wish these orders telegraphed to Nashville, they will be forwarded.

H. W. Halleck , *Chief of Staff* .

To this General Grant replied suspending the order for Thomas' relief, “until it is seen if he will do anything.”

City Point, Va., Dec. 11, 1864.

Major General George H. Thomas, Nashville:

If you delay attacking longer, the mortifying spectacle will be witnessed of a rebel army moving for the Ohio, and you will be forced to act, accepting such weather as you find. Let there be no further delay. * * * I am in hopes of receiving a dispatch from you today announcing that you have moved. Delay no longer for weather or reinforcements.

U. S. Grant , *Lieut. General* .

Head Quarters, Armies of the U. S., City Point, Va., Dec. 13, 1864. Special Order No. 149.

Major General John A. Logan, U. S. Volunteers, will proceed immediately to Nashville, Tenn., report by telegraph to the Lieut. General his arrival at Louisville, Kentucky, and also his arrival at Nashville, Tenn. * * * By command of Lieut. Gen. Grant.

T. S. Bowers , *Assistant Adjutant General* .

Thomas to Halleck: Nashville, Dec. 14, 1864, 8 P. M.

* * * The ice having melted away today, the enemy will be attacked tomorrow morning. Much as I regret the apparent delay in attacking the enemy, it could not have been done before with any reasonable prospect of success.

George H. Thomas , *Major General Commanding* .

These are but a few of the many dispatches, all of like tenor, with which Thomas was overwhelmed at this time, but those quoted clearly indicate the serious character of the crisis the issue of which was to be decided by the impending battle at Nashville. A defeat of Thomas' army meant the probable further advance of Hood to the Ohio river and beyond. It was surely the highest duty of Thomas to make certain his success so far as precaution, preparation and skill could assure it; yet he was subjected to this fire in the rear that would have daunted any man who was not endowed 606 with the high qualities of character, and the great ability and skill, that ever distinguished in an emergency the “Rock of Chickamauga.”

As indicated in one of General Thomas' dispatches, the attack on Hood's position would doubtless have been made December 10th but for the extraordinary condition of the elements. A storm of sleet freezing as it fell had covered the earth with an icy crust, on which neither men nor animals could keep their feet in their efforts to move over the rolling and hilly surface that characterizes the topography of the country in the vicinity of Nashville. A large number of horses had been disabled in attempts to place cavalry in position, and many serious accidents to the men had occurred while moving to their posts in the performance of routine duties in maintaining the guard and picket lines. This ice embargo was raised by a moderation in the weather on the 14th, and orders were issued in the evening of that day for an advance against the enemy early on the morning of the 15th.

The disposition of General Thomas' forces and their initial movements as directed in his general order for the day were substantially as follows:

General A. J. Smith, commanding detachment of the Army of the Tennessee, after forming his troops on and near the Harding pike in front of his present position, will make a vigorous assault on the enemy's left. Major General Wilson, commanding Cavalry Corps, with three divisions will support General Smith's right, * * * Brig. General T. J. Wood, commanding Fourth Army Corps, * * * will form on the Hillsboro pike to support

General Smith's left, and operate on the left and rear of the enemy's advanced position on Montgomery hill. Major General Schofield, commanding Twenty-third Army Corps, will occupy the trenches from Fort Negley to Lawrens hill with a strong skirmish line, moving the remainder of his forces in front of the works, and co-operate with General Wood, protecting the latter's left flank against an attack by the enemy. Major General Steedman will occupy the interior line in rear of his present position * * * with a strong skirmish line, and mass the remainder of his force to act according to the exigencies which may arise during these operations. Brig. General Miller, with the troops forming the garrison of Nashville, will occupy the interior line, * * * and also the Quartermaster's troops under Brig. General Donaldson. The troops occupying the interior line will be under the direction of General Steedman, who is charged with the immediate defence of Nashville during operations around the city.

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As the battle progressed these dispositions were of course greatly changed, but I will refer to such changes only as they relate to or in some manner affect the movements of General Smith's corps, to which the Minnesota regiments were attached.

It will be noted that in General Thomas' disposition of his forces he apparently made ample arrangements for the defense of Nashville in case of a reverse; and it will also be noted that General Smith's command was designated to make the main assault upon the enemy.

At six A. M. of the 15th the army left its entrenchments and moved to the front. A thick fog hung over the country and enveloped both armies, but the rising sun and a moderate southern breeze lifted the mists, and by ten o'clock General Thomas' order to Smith, to “make a vigorous assault on the enemy's left,” was in full process of execution. The enemy in that part of the field was apparently unprepared to meet so determined an advance, as he offered but a feeble resistance to Smith's initial attack, retiring in fairly good order until a line of redoubts was reached about two miles to the rear of where he was first encountered. Here a more stubborn resistance was offered, and our advance was brought

to a momentary halt. General McArthur was ordered to test the mettle of his division, which included the four Minnesota regiments, in an assault upon two of the redoubts that were particularly spiteful in the delivery of shell and canister along our front. This division had made something of a specialty of that kind of work in former conflicts of the war, and had become expert in its own conceit along that line. The artillery of the division gave its customary response to the fire of the rebel batteries; and the infantry, massed in double lines, was hurled with such force against the redoubts that the enemy, apparently staggered by the vigor of the blow, scarcely checked the onslaught. The redoubts, with their contents of men and guns and most of their supporting force, were gathered in as trophies of the affair.

As if eager to reach the next obstacle to their progress, the division pushed onward. The impetus of the charge had been but slightly checked by the impact with the enemy, and the fleeing rebels realized that their Nemesis was close upon their heels. A few escaped to report to their comrades what had happened, aided 608 by the fact that a strong column of the enemy was now advancing from their rear, and which naturally checked the pursuit. This new development suggested a pause, as it involved a re-alignment and a partial change of front. The troops of the Second division of Smith's corps upon the left had not advanced as rapidly as McArthur's division, for the reason that fortified positions of the enemy were sooner encountered and perhaps were more stubbornly defended. In consequence of this condition there occurred a considerable interval to the left and rear between the two divisions, as the advance progressed beyond the captured redoubts. The third brigade was therefore swung to the left, and participated with the Second division in an assault upon and the capture of a strong position of the enemy, in the course of which its commander, Colonel Hill, a much respected and a most accomplished and gallant officer, was killed. Most fortunate for the service, there was an able and skillful officer at hand to take his place in the person of Colonel William R. Marshall of the Seventh Minnesota, who thereafter commanded the Third brigade.

The First brigade of McArthur's division had been diverted somewhat to the right in pursuit of a body of the enemy, and thus the Second brigade found itself considerably in advance of and somewhat isolated from the rest of the division. It seemed for the moment that the Second brigade would have a fight on its own account with the advancing body of the enemy referred to, whose numbers rendered such an outlook somewhat discouraging. The battery of the brigade, the Second Iowa, here performed most essential service in aiding to check the enemy's advance until a division of the Twenty-third corps came up on the right. Whether the Second brigade was now temporarily attached to Couch's division of the Twenty-third corps, or whether Couch's division was attached to the Second brigade, is not material, as neither received orders from or made reports to the other.

The commander of the Second brigade could see readily enough what ought next to be done, but he realized that a ranking officer was in command on his immediate right, and hence awaited development in that direction, in the meantime deploying two companies of Minnesota troops in skirmish order as a protection to his exposed left flank. The enemy had halted and formed in line 609 along the crest of a ridge, which afforded him a position of some advantage, the fire from which caused us much annoyance and some loss. About four o'clock P. M ., a forward movement developed on the right, in which the Second brigade promptly joined and immediately became hotly engaged. The resistance encountered was for a moment quite obstinate, causing numerous casualties but no substantial halt. Like the charge earlier in the day against the redoubts, the momentum of the movement proved an irresistible force, and, as it did not encounter an immovable body, the position of the enemy was carried and a considerable number of prisoners and two pieces of artillery were captured by the Second brigade. The movement in pursuit was continued until a condition of exhaustion in our men began to manifest itself, which, with the approaching darkness, made it prudent to call a halt. A favorable position to reform our lines was sought; the several brigades of the division were re-assembled in their proper relation to each other; cartridge boxes were replenished, and haversacks were searched for the refreshing hard tack, the proximity of the enemy forbidding fires for making coffee.

The result of the day's operation, on that part of the field where General Smith had been ordered to “make a vigorous assault,” had been the capture of several strong positions, a large number of prisoners, and many guns; the enemy was driven a distance of nearly five miles, and his line of retreat seriously threatened. There had not been so much accomplished on the left of the army, nor so much distance gained, though substantial results were realized all along the line. The result in the aggregate was a decided victory for Thomas, and a serious though not a crushing defeat for Hood. The latter had been driven to his last line of defense, where he must make the fight of his life on the morrow, or must retreat during the night.

Daylight of the 16th disclosed the unmistakable purpose of Hood to stake everything upon a final effort to retrieve his discomfiture of the preceding day. He had chosen a position of great natural advantage, and had entrenched it in a manner that impressed us at once that we were “up against” a serious proposition.

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Thomas' lines required considerable readjustment to conform to the positions he had now to confront. In these preliminary movements Hood's artillery much delayed and complicated the required dispositions in their process of formation. Every available man was ordered to the front. Nashville was now reasonably safe, and the troops left for its immediate defense were required to strengthen the attacking lines.

I digress here for a moment to indicate the exact position of the Minnesota regiments in this final formation. All the brigades of the Sixteenth corps were formed in double lines. The position of the Tenth Minnesota was upon the left in the front line of the First brigade; the Fifth and Ninth Minnesota constituted the front line of the Second brigade; and the Seventh Minnesota was upon the right of the Third brigade, also in front, thus bringing the four Minnesota regiments in a continuous line and all in front.

It was past midday before Thomas' lines were finally adjusted, but in the meantime the Sixteenth corps had worked itself forward to within moderate range of the enemy's defenses, where slight entrenchments were constructed, sufficient to enable a few sharpshooters to get in their work. The artillery of the division had expended much ammunition in responding to the enemy's batteries, and in places had succeeded in breaching the hostile entrenchments. About three o'clock P. M . an assault was made far to the left, on Overton hill, whose crest was crossed by Hood's defensive line, by three brigades of the troops of Generals Wood and Steedman; but, though gallantly made, the assault was repulsed with serious loss to the troops engaged. That evidently was not a vulnerable point in Hood's defense, and then General Thomas practically repeated his initial order of the preceding day, for General Smith to make a “vigorous attack on the enemy's left.”

This order went forth at four o'clock P. M ., and the men who for hours had lain with enforced inactivity, under the enemy's fire, greeted it with a feeling of relief. There can hardly be a more depressing condition in practical warfare than to lie for hours exposed to a galling fire that cannot be effectively returned, while held in leash in momentary expectation of an opportunity to make reprisals on one's tormentors. Our Minnesota boys were here under a peculiar but most stimulating inspiration. In no instance 611 before during the war were nearly so many of Minnesota's sons in line together, facing the country's foes. Surely this was an opportunity to show the material of which Minnesota soldiers were made, and to achieve glory for the young commonwealth in which they took so great a pride. Some of these regiments had been in many battles and never suffered a defeat. The older of the regiments had an established reputation to maintain, and the younger ones had here an opportunity to win for their colors and their state the fullest possible measure of glory. No order in battle was ever more promptly responded to, and no troops were ever more eager in its execution.

The line of advance lay across level grounnd, a recently cultivated cornfield, except in front of the Tenth Minnesota, where the topography presented a considerable elevation. The moment the division rose to its feet and commenced its advance, it was met with a withering volley from the enemy's trenches and heavy discharge of canister from three batteries of artillery. It seemed for a moment that nothing human could withstand such a murderous fire at so close a range, but the men were nerved up to the limit of possible tension, and they started with grim determination on the charge. The ground had been much softened by the recent storm, a condition that considerably retarded progress but otherwise did not check the movement. The advance was maintained with notable steadiness, though distressing gaps in the ranks told too well the effectiveness of the enemy's fire. The colors of all the regiments repeatedly fell, but were always rescued and borne onward. The Fifth Minnesota had three of its color bearers killed and four of its color guard wounded. Nearly every mounted officer lost his horse, but kept his nerve. The ground was thickly strewn with dead and wounded men, but even the latter joined in the cheers that now rent the air in great volume, as the rebel works were reached and in a wild onset carried at every point. Most of the enemy surrendered in the trenches where they stood, his artillery being abandoned on the spot from whence those vicious discharges of canister had brought us so much grief. Hood's defensive line had been pierced at a vital point, and, if another hour of daylight had been vouchsafed us, his line of retreat would have been in General Thomas' hands.

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This break in Hood's defenses and the consequent threatening of his rear necessarily loosened his grip at other points and the general attack which followed was uniformly successful. The advantage was pressed to the utmost until darkness put a period to farther effort, but Hood's army was now essentially a wreck. Abandoning his artillery, wagon trains, and all impedimenta that would in any manner incumber his movements in retreat, such of his army as was not captured fled in a mob southward, hotly pursued by Thomas. Through capture and desertions, it underwent a rapid process of disintegration all the

way to the Tennessee river. A few skeleton detachments crossed the river, but as an organization there was practically nothing left of that grand army of invasion whose original objective was the country north of the Ohio river.

The experience of the Minnesota regiments, as well as of the army generally, in the pursuit of the fragments of Hood's army was particularly severe. The weather was cold and wet, raining and snowing by turns; the roads were embargoed with mud, almost unfathomable at times, and again frozen into rocky ruts that even the animals refused to tackle in their efforts to drag along the artillery and trains. The troops were without camp equipage of any sort, and but scantily supplied with rations. Many who survived the battle succumbed to the rigors of the campaign that followed it.

The most impressive evidence of the serious character of the duty imposed upon the Minnesota regiments in the battle of Nashville, and of its comprehensive execution, is the list of casualties they suffered. The number of the killed or mortally wounded was 63, with 237 others wounded and one missing; a total of 301 men was the measure of sacrifice here lain upon the altar of the country's cause. To this total the Fifth regiment contributed 107; the Seventh, 62; the Ninth, 58; and the Tenth, 74. Most regiments at that period of the war were reduced to a maximum on duty of from 350 to 400 men, which will indicate the large percentage of loss sustained.

The record of Minnesota in the battle of Nashville would be incomplete without a reference to the previous service performed by the Eighth Minnesota Infantry in the battle of Murfreesboro, 613 December 7th, 1864. While investing Nashville, General Hood sent a detachment of his army under Generals Forrest and Bate to endeavor to dislodge and capture, or to disperse, the garrison at Murfreesboro, Tennessee, which has before been alluded to as an outlying fortified position of much importance. This force of the enemy was met outside the defenses of the town by two brigades under General R. H. Milroy, one of which was commanded by Colonel M. T. Thomas of the Eighth Minnesota. The enemy was decisively defeated after a severe engagement, the character of which will

be indicated by the casualties suffered by the Eighth Minnesota. A total of 90 men, 13 killed and 77 wounded, was the contribution Minnesota here made to the sacrifice required to secure the great results achieved at Nashville. The Eighth Regiment also performed essential service in the pursuit of the enemy after the battle, and contributed its share in making Hood's retreat the rout it became.

The battle of Nashville is always given a place among the decisive battles of the Civil War. The army of the enemy encountered at Nashville was not simply defeated, but it was practically destroyed. It left the field in demoralized fragments, and even these dissolved like snow under an April sun. It also decided adversely to the enemy a campaign undertaken under promising conditions, for a purpose, which, if successful, would have had a most serious effect upon the Union cause. If Hood had reached the Ohio river, it would have been a fair offset to Sherman's march to the sea. It would doubtless have necessitated another levy of troops at a time when the resources of the country, both in men and in the sinews of war, were strained almost to the limit. (It had already been proposed by General Grant, in one of the dispatches to Washington that has been quoted, that the states of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, be called on for 60,000 men to meet this threatened danger.) It would have precipitated conditions that might have seriously embarrassed the situation on the Potomac, and throughout the theater of war in the east.

Thomas' success paralyzed the enemy in the west, and enabled him to send an army corps under Schofield to reinforce Grant in the east, and another column under Smith to the south, to aid in the capture of the last stronghold of the enemy in the west at Mobile, 614 Alabama. A part of the army with which Thomas won Nashville was in at the death of the Confederacy in Virginia, and another part witnessed its dying struggles on the Gulf of Mexico. It required the genius of a great captain to organize and equip, from the fragments and resources at his hand, such an army as Thomas hurled against Hood, and to infuse into it in so short a time the morale that would enable it to win the decisive results that were secured at Nashville.

The war for the Union developed many great military characters, but the peer of any of them, in sterling soldierly qualities, skill in tactical warfare, and indomitable courage and determination in battle, was Major General George H. Thomas.

A spirited description of the operations of the Minnesota regiments in the battles about Nashville, written by John P. Owens, a pioneer Minnesotan, a staff officer of the First division at the time, was published in the St. Paul Press of December 30th, 1864. I here quote a passage from that description, relating to the final charge of the second day, but omitting some personal allusions that would hardly be appropriate in this paper.

At three o'clock P. M ., the clouds had thickened and a moderate rain commenced to fall; the atmosphere became prematurely darkened as if night was setting in. The cavalry force which had been operating vigorously on the extreme right, and well towards the rear of the enemy, apparently became blinded by the mists which settled upon the hills, and their firing materially slackened. “Old Man Smith” (as the boys of his command delighted in calling him) and General McArthur were about, and the First Division, Joe Mower's old division, must maintain its dearly bought laurels of former days. The division was to charge Cheatham's veterans,—not only to charge them, but to rout them, capture and destroy them,—and, if possible, write their history in lines of blood as doomed rebels who once existed, but after this charge were not to exist. It was not known in military and confidential circles in Nashville that this telling charge was to be made, or at what time it was to be made, but somehow or other people felt it in their bones that it would come off at about the time it did, and many were there to witness it. We find also General 615 Thomas at hand,—accidentally, perhaps, but he was there, to witness the exciting scene. General Smith was there of course, muscle and nerve all in motion, knowing then as well what would be the result as he did when it was all over, the very embodiment of the towering, all conquering veteran that he is, eyeing with more than wonted confidence the compact lines of his veterans. McArthur, with that powerfully knit frame, and that intelligent and well developed Scotch face,—firmness amounting almost to stubbornness visible in every

feature,—sat on his horse awaiting the proper moment to give the final order. And, as if to make the picture complete, Andrew Johnson, whom the soldiers of the Union and the people at home have just honored with the second office in the gift of the nation, was close at hand to behold the grand military drama about to be enacted.

The hour arrives, four o'clock precisely by McArthur's time. The order goes forth, and, with a shout that is heard plainly away off in our old lines near Nashville, the division starts for the works before it. The Second brigade leads off. Colonel Hubbard, with hat in hand, waving it over his head, leads on his trusty warriors. He knows what is coming, but he also knows the men he leads. Across the cornfield, the soft ground giving away until men and horses sink at every step knee-deep, under a shower of canister, shell, and minie-balls, filling every inch of the atmosphere and meeting them square in the face, they keep onward. The works are gained; no faltering yet; and now goes up the flag of the Ninth Minnesota on the works; simultaneously with it the flag of the veteran Fifth, —which has been shot down four times in this advance and riddled with a full charge of canister,—ascends; the works are carried in front of all the brigades of the division, and Minnesota holds the position in an unbroken line of half a mile in extent. Prisoners commence passing to the rear. First comes Captain McGrew of the Fifth, a staff officer of Colonel Hubbard's with about a regiment of them; then we meet officers and enlisted men of all the regiments, with squads larger than they can be supposed to take care of,—in all, the captures amounting to at least as many men as there were in the Second brigade. The whole work—a work that all military men who witnessed it agree in pronouncing a charge of scarcely equalled brilliancy in the annals of warfare,—was accomplished in ten minutes' time. The enemy was completely routed and driven to the adjacent hills in utter confusion. Ten pieces of artillery of the first quality were captured, in addition to small arms and prisoners without number…

Minnesota gained more glory than the war had previously allowed her to gain. The gallantry of her officers and men is the theme of all tongues and pens. Colonel Hubbard

was personally complimented 616 immediately after the action by Generals Thomas, Smith, and McArthur, uniting in a telegram to the President requesting his promotion…

The Minnesota troops received highly honorable mention in the official reports of the battle of Nashville, in which occur the following:

General John McArthur, commanding the First Division of the Sixteenth Army Corps, said: “I wish particularly to mention the gallant conduct of Col. William R. Marshall, Seventh Minnesota Infantry Volunteers, commanding the Third Brigade, called to take command during the first day's battle and continuing throughout. His admirable management and example stamp him as an officer of rare merit.”

General A. J. Smith, commanding the Sixteenth Army Corps, said: “Col. L. F. Hubbard had three horses shot under him on the 16th. Going into action with a total of 1,421 muskets in his brigade, he captured over 2,000 prisoners, 9 pieces of artillery, and 7 stands of colors, and the casualties of his brigade number 315.”

The following was sent by telegraph to President Lincoln:

Head Quarters, First Division, Detachment Army of the Tennessee.

In the field near Nashville, Tenn., Dec. 17, 1864.

Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States,

Smith's “Guerrillas” again did a noble work yesterday, not the least portion of which is due the First Division. I respectfully ask, as an act of justice and honor fairly won, that Col. W. L. McMillan, Ninety-fifth Regiment, Ohio Infantry Volunteers, Col. L. F. Hubbard, Fifth Regiment, Minnesota Infantry Volunteers, commanding the First and Second brigades respectively, be appointed Brigadier Generals; also Col. S. G. Hill, Thirty-fifth Regiment,

Iowa Infantry Volunteers, who commanded the Third Brigade and was killed while gallantly charging the enemy's works, I would recommend to be gazetted as Brigadier General.

John McArthur , *Brigadier General, U. S. Vols* .

I heartily concur in the recommendation of General McArthur, and respectfully request the appointments may be made.

A. J. Smith , *Major General* .

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I witnessed the assault on the enemy's works conducted by the above named officers, and unhesitatingly commend them for their gallant bearing.

George H. Thomas , *Major General, U. S. Vols., Commanding Department of the Cumberland* .

The success of General Thomas naturally restored equanimity at official headquarters, and changed the tone of the dispatches that came from the east. The following are samples that indicate the general character of the greetings which now cheered the victor of Nashville:

Washington, Dec. 15, 1864.

Major General George H. Thomas, Nashville,

I was just on my way to Nashville, but receiving a dispatch detailing your splendid success of today I shall go no farther. Push the enemy now and give him no rest…

U. S. Grant , *Lieut. General* .

Washington, Dec. 15, 1864.

Major General Thomas:

I rejoice in tendering to you and the gallant officers and soldiers of your command, the thanks of this department for the brilliant achievement of this day…We shall give you a hundred guns in the morning.

E. M. Stanton , *Secretary of War* .

Washington, Dec. 16, 1864.

To Major General Thomas:

Please accept for yourself, officers, and men, the nation's thanks for your work of yesterday. You made a magnificent beginning. A grand consummation is within your reach…

Abraham Lincoln .

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V. MINNESOTA IN THE CAMPAIGN OF MOBILE, 1865.*

* Read by Gen. L. F. Hubbard at the monthly meeting of the Executive Council, February 10, 1908.

The early months of the year 1865 found the Southern Confederacy in a condition that portended a rapidly approaching dissolution. The trend of events during the preceding year had been of a character to impress the popular mind with the fact that the pretense of an independent sovereignty on the part of the seceded states could not much longer be maintained, and that the end of the Civil War was near at hand. While the Confederate authorities still maintained an attitude of defiance and manifested a determination to continue the contest indefinitely, yet to the dispassionate observer of the situation it seemed that the only hope remaining to stimulate further resistance to national authority

was to secure a possible modification of the terms of final surrender. Even this hope was practically extinguished by the return to Richmond in February, 1865, of the Peace Commission, headed by Alexander H. Stevens, bringing the ultimatum of President Lincoln.

Though General Lee still held General Grant at bay before Petersburg and Richmond, and there was yet one point of some strategic importance in possession of the Confederates in the Southwest, at Mobile, Ala., in practically all the remaining territory of the so-called Confederacy the armed forces of the enemy had been successively defeated and had become disorganized and scattered. General Sherman had successfully accomplished his march to the sea, had captured Savannah, Ga., forced the evacuation of Charleston, S. C., and was on his march through the Carolinas to cooperate with General Grant in Virginia. The western armies of the Union had successfully performed and practically completed the work assigned them. The Confederate armies in the West had been overwhelmed and shattered, and the waning hopes of the enemy in three-fourths of the area of the seceded states were well nigh extinguished. In the central and western areas of conflict the armies of the Union had opened the Mississippi to the commerce

MAP ILLUSTRATING THE Campaign of Mobile. March & April , 1865.

619 of the world, had made secure their hold on all points of vantage they had won, and had swept through the “bowels of the land” from the Rio Grande to the Atlantic seacoast. There was little left for them to do where they had heretofore operated; hence they were available in large part to help out their brethren who had been so long battling along the Potomac. Sherman with his legions from the West was already near the southern boundary of Virginia. From General Thomas' army of the Cumberland there had been detached the Fourteenth Army Corps, under General D. S. Stanley, for operations near the Virginia border in East Tennessee, and General Stoneman, with a force of western cavalry, was operating in western North Carolina. Thomas had also organized a column of 12,000 cavalry under General J. H. Wilson that was about to move from the Tennessee river southeasterly through Alabama and Georgia, on a mission to cut the

communications and exhaust the resources in that part of the Confederacy, which now constituted practically the sole remaining dependence for supplies for the subsistence of the Rebel army in Virginia.

Thus was the cordon established that was designed to close in on and crush the only remaining army of the enemy that still maintained an organized and aggressive front.

The army under General George H. Thomas, that had the preceding December won the decisive battle of Nashville and practically destroyed the Confederate army under General J. B. Hood, halted in its course southward in pursuit of the fragments of the enemy on the banks of the Tennessee river near Eastport, Tenn. From this army were detached the forces referred to that were operating in East Tennessee and western North Carolina and the column of cavalry that was about to move into Alabama and Georgia. Thomas had early dispatched the Twenty-third Army Corps, under General Schofield, to reinforce Grant in the East, and was about to move the Sixteenth Corps to the same general destination, when he received orders to divert it to New Orleans.

General E. R. S. Canby, commanding the Department of the Gulf, had a considerable army occupying various points in his department, and had been expected long since to have taken Mobile. The reduction of Forts Morgan and Gaines, at the entrance to Mobile Bay, in August, 1864, was expected to be followed by vigorous efforts to take the city, and much impatience was manifested at 620 official headquarters at Canby's dilatory tactics. Canby had, for a time, apparently entertained the belief that Mobile would fall of its own weight; that the Confederates would conclude the force required for its occupation and defense could be used to more advantage elsewhere than in trying to maintain possession of a blockaded seaport. At all events, he was slow to respond to the instructions of the government to “take Mobile.” His efforts seemed to have been employed in collateral movements that may have had for their ultimate purpose the achievement of the general object in view, but which were altogether too slow in their development to keep pace with events transpiring elsewhere.

Conditions reached a climax when, early in March, 1865, Canby sent a request to the Quartermaster General at Washington for a construction corps and material to be sent him with which to reconstruct a railroad from Pensacola, Florida, northward. This being referred to General Grant, the latter telegraphed General Meigs, the Quartermaster General: “You need not send an article of railroad material or a man to Canby. We have no time for building railroads there now.” And to General Canby he wrote: “I am in receipt of a dispatch * * * informing me that you have made requisitions for a construction corps and material to build seventy miles of railroad. I have directed that none be sent. * * * I expected your movements to be co-operative with Sherman's last. This has now entirely failed. I wrote you long ago, urging you to push promptly and to live upon the country and destroy railroads, machine shops, etc., not to build them. *Take Mobile* and hold it, and push your forces to the interior—to Montgomery and to Selma. Destroy railroads, rolling stock, and everything useful for carrying on war, and, when you have done this, take such positions as can be supplied by water. By this means alone you can occupy positions from which the enemy's roads in the interior can be kept broken.”*

* General Grant's Memoirs, Vol. 2, page 411.

There was no mistaking the purport of these instructions, and their tone fairly implied that if Canby did not proceed along the line indicated more promptly, somebody else might be designated to “take Mobile.”

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It had now become known that orders had been issued from Richmond to hold Mobile at all hazard and contest the efforts for its reduction to the utmost. While the Confederates could not hope to prevent its ultimate capture, it was apparent that it would require a much larger army to take the place than to defend it; hence it seemed to be good tactics to hold Canby's army of 45,000 men in the vicinity by a force of one-third that number rather than release a large part of it for operation in the direction of Richmond, Virginia. It therefore

became evident that the “campaign of Mobile” was to assume more important proportions than had previously seemed probable.

Pursuant to the orders heretofore noted, the Sixteenth Army Corps, commanded by General A. J. Smith, embarked on transports at Eastport, Miss., on the 7th of February, 1865, and moved via the Tennessee, Ohio and Mississippi rivers to New Orleans, reporting to General Canby February 22. With this corps were the Fifth, Seventh, Ninth and Tenth Minnesota Infantry, all a part of the First Division, commanded by General John McArthur. The Tenth Minnesota, Lieut-Col. S. P. Jennison, was in the First Brigade, commanded by Colonel W. L. McMillan. The Fifth Minnesota, Lieut.-Col. W. B. Gere, and the Ninth Minnesota, Col. John S. Marsh, were in the Second Brigade, commanded by Col. L. F. Hubbard; and the Seventh Minnesota, Lieut.-Col. George Bradley, was in the Third Brigade, commanded by Col. William R. Marshall.

The Corps was assigned a camp at Chalmette, near the city of New Orleans, occupying the ground upon which General Jackson fought his battle with the British in 1812. While here the Sixth Minnesota, Col. H. P. Grant, which had been sent to New Orleans from St. Louis the preceding January, was assigned to the Sixteenth Corps, becoming a part of the Second Brigade of the Second Division. This brought together in the same corps command five Minnesota regiments, the largest number of Minnesota soldiers that campaigned together during the Civil War.

Early in March a concentration of the main Mobile column was ordered on Dauphin island, at the entrance to Mobile bay, and on the 7th of the month the Sixteenth Corps, moving by ocean steamers via the Gulf of Mexico, arrived at that rendezvous. Here it was detained until the 18th, in the meantime enjoying life in a manner and to a degree for which the soldier is rarely given opportunity. 622 Along the Gulf coast of the island there existed an extensive oyster bed, from whence its luscious product was conveyed to camp by the wagon load. The traditional army ration naturally became wholly neglected, its substitute being “oysters in every style.” It is presumed that none of the men had seen a fresh oyster

since their enlistment, and it is certainly assured that their appetite for that particular diet remained dormant for years afterward. Its efforts to exhaust that oyster bed was the only failure the Sixteenth Corps acknowledged in all its enterprises during the war.

On the 18th of March we regretfully left Dauphin island behind us and moved by steamers into Fish river, an eastern affluent of Mobile bay, landing at Dannelly's Mills, a few miles from its mouth, and at once engaged in movements that caused us to realize that the campaign of Mobile was earnestly in progress.

Except so far as may be required to give a general idea of the more important movements, this sketch will not make special reference to the service of the several commands engaged in the campaign of Mobile, other than that of the Sixteenth Army Corps, to which the Minnesota regiments were attached. The conditions and character of the service of all the units of the army were much the same, but none more active and laborious or more valuable and distinguished than that of “Smith's Guerrillas,” a sobriquet the Sixteenth Army Corps had borne since its campaign with the Red River expedition in 1864.

The city of Mobile is situated on low ground at the head of the bay that bears its name, and near the outlet of the water courses formed by the Alabama and Tombigbee rivers that discharge their waters through several channels into the bay. The main channel of these waterways, called Mobile river, flows across the city's front, and, in combination with the Tensas and Appalachee channels, forms a natural barrier against a land approach to the city from the east and north. These natural obstacles had been rendered more formidable by the construction of several forts and other artificial defenses along their eastern banks and on adjacent islands in the bay. The land approach to the city from the western shore of the bay was protected by three lines of earth fortifications, each of exceptional strength, and all of a character to withstand a prolonged effort to reduce and overcome them.
They did not envelop the principal avenues of egress from the city, and hence would not
623 assure the capture of the garrision if carried by assault. The plan of the campaign, therefore, contemplated the reduction of the defenses on the northeastern shore of the bay

and the acquisition of control of the navigable waterways that led to the Mobile, Alabama and Tombigbee rivers. The securing of these, it was assumed, would successfully flank and doubtless cause the abandonment of the immediate land defenses of Mobile.

The principal work in the series of defenses to be encountered on the northeastern shore, about seven miles east of Mobile, was Spanish Fort, an ancient earthwork that had been constructed during the period of Spanish occupation of the country, but which, of course, had been extended and elaborated in a manner to give it the modern characteristics of a work of its class. As now constituted, besides Spanish Fort proper, the line of defense included a group of three formidable redoubts, Alexis, McDermett, and Red Fort, all connected by a scientific system of strong entrenchments. Three or four miles north of these works, on the east bank of the Appalachee channel, was the fortified position of Blakely, consisting of a series of redoubts connected by rifle pits and protected by ditches and palisades and other obstructing approaches.* Other forts and batteries occupying points of vantage as auxiliaries of Spanish Fort and Blakely, notably Batteries Tracy and Huger, were located on adjacent islands, and proved important factors in the scientific scheme of defense that had been devised for the protection

* “Old Spanish Fort is a bastioned work, nearly enclosed, and built on a bluff, whose shape projects abruptly to the water. Its parapet on the bay side was partly natural, being made by excavating the earth from the side of the bluff and was thirty feet in thickness. The fort was armed with 7-inch Columbiads and 30-pounder Parotts—the latter made at Selma—and was designated as No. 1. Extending around that, in a semicircle, was a continuous line of breastworks and redoubts. The right of this line commenced 400 yards down the shore, on the highest and most prominent bluff, upward of 100 feet above the water, with a strong enclosed fort, called McDermett (No. 2), and armed with ten heavy guns. The slope of the bluff, toward the bay, is precipitous, and from its base to the water is a marsh 200 yards wide, on which the timber had been felled. To the north and left the descent was gradual, along which extended a line of rifle-pits, crossing a ravine and stream of water, and then up the slope of another bluff, on which was a strong battery, designated as No.

3. From there the line of works continued 600 yards in a northerly direction, and there turned toward the bay, striking the marsh on Bay Minette at a point about a mile above old Spanish Fort. This outer line of works was upward of two miles in length, and the batteries were all on high and commanding ground. The surface was covered with open pine timber, but in front of the outer line of works the trees were felled for a few hundred yards. Every ravine had borne a heavy growth of hard wood, which, having been slashed, made, with the underbrush and vines, and almost impassable obstruction. The ditch in front of the breastworks was five feet deep and eight feet wide, but in front of Fort McDermett it was deeper and wider. In front of the batteries were also detached riffle-pits for sharpshooters, and along the entire front was a line of abatis fifteen feet wide. On the extreme left the works were unfinished."—Campaign of Mobile, by General C. C. Andrews, pages 48 and 49, published in 1867.

"The fortifications around Blakely were constructed in a sort of semicircle, resting on a bluff close to the river, at the extreme left, and terminating with the high ground a few rods from the river on the right. The line was nearly three miles in length, and included nine well built redoubts or lunettes. The fortifications were thoroughly built, and were armed with about forty pieces of artillery. But the ditches were not more than four or five feet deep. From 600 to 800 yards all along the front the trees had been felled—pines on the high ground and hard-wood trees in the ravines. Fifty yards out from the works was a line of abatis, and opposite some of the redoubts was an interior line. Then, 300 yards out to the front, parallel with the works, was another line of abatis, and behind the latter were detached rifle-pits."—Ibid., p. 122.

624 of this approach to the city of Mobile. All these works contained complete armaments of modern artillery, many of the guns being of large calibre and great range. Spanish Fort and Blakely were located on high ground, the topography of their approaches greatly favoring their defense, to which were added, besides the usual ditches and moats, abatis, chevaux de frise, wire entanglements, sub-terra shells, and other artificial devices,

altogether presenting a formidable combination which an assailant of these works must encounter.

The garrison of Mobile and its outlying defensive works was composed of about 15,000 men under the general command of General D. H. Maury, Spanish Fort being under the immediate command of General R. L. Gibson, and Blakely of General St. John R. Liddell.

General Canby had planned to move the force employed in his operations against Mobile in two columns, the main column consisting of the Sixteenth Corps (about 16,000 men), two divisions of the Thirteenth Corps (about 13,200 men), and detachments of cavalry, artillery and engineers of about 3,000 men. This force of 32,200 men was to move under his immediate command directly from the point of Fish river, where it had been concentrated, against Spanish Fort and Blakely. A force of 13,200 men, composed of a division of the Thirteenth Corps, commanded by General C. C. Andrews (a Minnesota soldier), a division of colored troops, and a brigade of cavalry, all under command of General Frederick 625 Steele, were to move from Pensacola, Florida, on a circuitous route via Pollard, Alabama, as if to first threaten an incursion into the interior in the direction of Montgomery, Alabama. As the latter force had much the longer route to cover, it was the first to move. On the 19th of March the movement from Pensacola began, and on the 25th the Sixteenth Corps, followed by the Thirteenth, moved from Dannelly's Mills in the direction of Spanish Fort. The first division, in which were four Minnesota regiments, held the advance, and soon encountered a small force of the enemy which had held a position as a “corps of observation” in the vicinity since the occupation of the Union base on Fish river. This force fell back under the pressure of the advance movement, though skirmishing moderately as it retired. Colonel Marshall, of the Seventh Minnesota, was slightly wounded in the shoulder by a sharpshooter while on the skirmish line on the 25th.

The vicinity of Spanish Fort was reached early in the day of the 27th, where the enemy was encountered in such force as to seem to require the deployment of a large part of the command in order of battle. The well chosen position here occupied by the enemy,

and his defiant attitude indicated a purpose to give battle outside the fortifications. The stubborn resistance presented to our farther advance caused dispositions to be made for an organized attack; but as we moved forward in battle array, as if to charge the enemy's position, our lines presented so formidable a front as to apparently discourage an encounter in the open, the enemy giving way after delivering a few volleys and sullenly retiring towards his fortified position. As we followed his movement in retreat we soon came within range of the guns of Spanish Fort, under the protection of which the enemy reached his entrenched lines. Though these operations did not give opportunity for close encounter the casualties were numerous. McArthur's division suffered a loss of 68 in killed and wounded, 52 of which were in Hubbard's Brigade. Though encountering a hot fire from the defenses of the fort, the advance was steadily maintained, and before the day was spent we were within assaulting distance of the enemy's fortified position, and were momentarily expecting orders to storm the frowning works that were belching their furious fire in our faces. Though surprised, we were by no means disappointed when it was ordered that the troops should establish a line of investment. We had before 626 been made to realize that we were now under the direction of a somewhat cautious commander. At every bivouac on our advance we had been required to intrench our front, a new experience for the Sixteenth Army Corps, and we had otherwise been impressed with the fact that conservative influences were in control of the army. Under the conditions obtaining earlier in the war, it would probably have been good military tactics to have made an immediate assault, particularly as a part of the hostile works were in an incomplete conditions, and the dispositions for their defense in a somewhat disorganized state. An assault would probably have been successful, but it would have involved a serious sacrifice of life, which the operations of a siege might largely obviate; and consideration of humanity at that period of the war—evidently so near its close—was no doubt a powerful factor in directing General Canby's policy.

The line of investment was established at varying distances of from 500 to 800 yards from the enemy's works, as the broken topography permitted, and entrenchments of logs and

earth were at once constructed. This line extended from the shore of the bay on the south to the bank of the water front of the fort on the north, a distance of about two miles.

The approach to the water front of the fort had been obstructed by various devices that effectually closed the navigable channel passing the work. These were principally submarine mines and torpedoes, though in places piling had been driven. Batteries Tracy and Huger, located on nearby islands, also commanded the water approaches to the fort, and in those works were several rifled guns of the largest calibre then known in warfare.

It was confidently expected that the co-operating naval contingent commanded by Acting Rear Admiral H. K. Thatcher would be able to establish a close blockade of Spanish Fort on its water front, and thus effect a complete investment of the work. It developed that conditions rendered this impracticable, and hence the place could not be so isolated as to render a siege most effective. During subsequent operations, therefore, Spanish Fort had continuous, though somewhat precarious, communication with auxiliary positions and with its base at Mobile.

627

While the movements noted against Spanish Fort were in progress, the Pensacola column, under Steele, in connection with the Second Division of the Sixteenth Army Corps, in which was the Sixth Minnesota, had enveloped the land defenses of Blakely and established a similar line of investment on the land front of that position. The conditions on the water approach to Blakely were of like character to those existing at Spanish Fort; hence the siege of both places presented similar problems for solution. At both positions siege operations by regular approaches and the installation of protected batteries of heavy guns were at once undertaken.

The sieges of Spanish Fort and Blakely were short, but they were prosecuted with great vigor. They covered operations at both positions from March 27 to April 9. Skillful engineers were at hand to trace the lines to be occupied and to indicate the character

of the trenches, zigzags, saps, parallels, and emplacements, by means of which the besiegers maintained a steady and sure approach to the enemy's works.

The labor imposed upon the men was arduous and continuous, as the work was prosecuted day and night. The previous three years' service of the men had made them all experts in the use of intrenching tools, as well as of the arms they bore, and many of them could formulate as scientific a system of approaches to a fortified position as the best engineers in the army. The supervision of the engineering corps was, however, important in properly connecting and harmonizing the operations of the several commands.*

* Capt. D. L. Wellman of the Ninth Minnesota, an aide upon General McArthur's staff, and an engineer of much previous experience, was among the most efficient of the corps engaged in this duty.

The broken and rolling topography of the ground to be covered by these approaches, involving the crossing of ravines in places with abrupt banks and the avoidance, so far as possible, of points upon which too hot a fire from the forts could be concentrated, rendered the work complicated as well as extremely dangerous. Many a soldier practically dug his own grave while engaged in this work, as a shell would explode in his vicinity or the keen eye of a sharpshooter would detect an exposure perhaps impossible to prevent. It is difficult to realize, as it is impossible to describe, the intense nature of the strain to which a soldier is continuously subjected while performing duty of this character. While the danger to life is perhaps 628 less than when engaged in battle, the sustaining inspiration of possibly achieving some marked success momentarily hoped for is lacking. In battle combat all the soldier's faculties are alert, his nerves at the utmost tension and his thoughts concentrated upon the accomplishment of the duty immediately before him. When actively engaged he rarely realizes the danger he confronts, and gives little thought to the possibility that in the next moment he may lose his life. Especially if the battle is going favorably, an intoxication possesses him, more stimulating and exhilarating than any other possible influence or agency to which human intelligence is subject. In any event,

he feels that he is in a situation where he can give as well as take, and, therefore, he has an even chance with his antagonist; or, expressed in the vernacular of the time, he feels that he is being given measurably a “square deal.” It is quite otherwise when digging in the trenches in front of a fortified position. There is no inspiration in that kind of service. The soldier's thoughts inevitably dwell upon the possibility that any moment a missile projected by a dead shot from the enemy's line may cripple him, or that a shell may explode in his vicinity and crush him. To labor for hours under such conditions constitutes an experience that is most depressing and involves a strain that is exhausting.

As the work progressed and a parallel was established, the latter would be occupied by as strong a line of sharpshooters as it would accommodate, and the enemy made to realize that he was within easy range and must become more circumspect in his efforts to retard the work of the besiegers. Many a Confederate paid for his temerity with his life as he ventured to take sight through the porthole in his front at an exposed part of a Union soldier wielding a spade or a pick; or, perhaps, at the hat raised just above the trench by its owner for the purpose of drawing his fire. As an embrasure on the enemy's line would be opened to allow a piece of artillery to be fired, the chances were that the man who sought to sight the piece would within the moment drop, his brain pierced by a mine ball before his duty was half performed. Most important service of this character was performed by a permanent detail of 250 men from among the best shots of the Second Brigade and composed largely of men from the Fifth and Ninth Minnesota, 629 under command of Capt. A. P. French of the Fifth Minnesota. Similar details were made from the Seventh and Tenth Minnesota Regiments, of the other brigades of McArthur's Division, and, indeed, from all the commands along the line of investment; and by the enterprise, daring and skill of these sharpshooters much protection was afforded to the details at work constructing the approaches. As the work neared the hostile lines, an advanced rifle pit of the enemy would occasionally become enveloped and its occupants made prisoners, sometimes to the apparent satisfaction of the captives.

A device that contributed its full quota of annoyance to the enemy as we neared his lines was a mortar made of gumwood, bound with strap iron and fashioned much after those constructed of more substantial material. From these primitive and apparently frail specimens of ordnance, shells were projected into the fort. Being located in the advanced trenches, but a moderate charge of explosive was required to project the shell; hence they could be used with comparative safety, though the projectile itself was as destructive as those used by the batteries located a considerable distance in the rear. Our Minnesota boys claimed the credit of this invention, which, I think, was generally conceded. The Seventh Minnesota brought home one of these mortars used by that regiment at Spanish Fort, which is now in possession of this society and displayed as an interesting relic of the Civil War.

The most advanced parallel in front of the Second Brigade of the First Division had reached a point within sixty yards of the enemy's principal fortified line, on the 8th of April, and from this and other advanced positions along the besiegers' front, dispositions were being made to make an assault on the enemy's works early the following day. While these were in progress the troops of the Iowa Brigade (Third Division, Sixteenth Army Corps), commanded by Colonel Geddes, occupying the extreme right of the line, in its efforts to secure a more advanced position, came into collision just at dark with the part of the garrison in its front, and in the sharp encounter that followed, the enemy was forced back of and beyond his main defensive line, and a position secured that flanked and enfiladed for a few hundred yards the interior of the enemy's works. The locality leading to the position thus gained was low and swampy, presenting much difficulty, especially in the prevailing 630 darkness, in properly directing necessary supporting movements; but the Iowa men, notwithstanding the desperate efforts of the enemy to dislodge them, maintained the advantage gained until strongly reinforced. The enemy, realizing that this break in their line would be followed by a pressure that it would be futile to try to resist, at once proceeded to utilize the means he had provided for such an emergency, and began to hurriedly evacute Spanish Fort.

The failure of the navy to cut the line of water communication between the fort and its auxiliary positions made it possible for a large part of the garrison to escape. A treadway leading across a swamp to Battery Tracy was the principal means of exit, a fleet of small boats the while aiding the exodus.

This lodgment, secured on the right of the line, was, of course, followed by a general advance, and soon after midnight all the defenses of the enemy were occupied and Spanish Fort in full possession of the Union forces. In front of the First Division, Captain French promptly moved his detail of sharpshooters into the works, captured the line of pickets that were left in the trenches to maintain an appearance of defense, and following the route of the enemy's retreat, captured a body of prisoners with some artillery near the point where the enemy were leaving the fort.

Captain McGrew, of the Fifth Minnesota, an aide on the staff of his brigade commander, who was superintending the operation of the sappers, led a regiment of the brigade (Forty-seventh Illinois) into Fort Alexis, taking possession of its armament of eleven heavy guns as trophies of the First Division of the Sixteenth Army Corps.

Though the visible result of the acquisition of Spanish Fort seemed at the moment a somewhat meager reward for our labor and sacrifice (the capture of but a fraction of the garrison and about fifty heavy guns), yet we felt that we had secured an important strategic advantage, and that it must prove the beginning of the end of the campaign. A part of the escaping garrison made its way to Mobile, but a considerable portion found refuge within the fortifications of Blakely, where they realized the next day that they had escaped from the frying pan only to fall into the fire.

631

Before daylight of the 9th the Sixteenth Army Corps received orders to move immediately to Blakely, where its Third Division had already dug its way well up to the hostile lines,

and at an early hour of the day was deployed in support of the troops that confronted that position.

Though the approaches to Blakely were in a less advanced stage than had been reached in front of Spanish Fort, the capture of the latter gave a notable impulse to the army, and, under the influence of the enthusiasm it aroused, it was deemed opportune to make an assault and finish the business while the men were in the mood. The necessary dispositions were therefore hurriedly made, and at 5:30 P. M. the order was given to storm the enemy's works all along the line. General Canby says in his report that, “with a gallantry to which there were no exceptions, the troops pressed forward under a heavy fire of artillery and musketry, passing over exploding torpedoes, networks and abatis, and assaulted and carried the enemy's works in about twenty minutes, each division carrying the works in its front.”

While General A. J. Smith, commanding the Sixteenth Army Corps, claims in his report that his command “was on the parapet with its colors at the time the other commands started to assault,” it must be conceded, as stated by General Canby, that each command captured the works in its front with the men and material they contained. It may be stated, however, as an authenticated fact, that General Smith first indicated a purpose to make an assault, and asked for co-operation of the other commands at the hour he had fixed.

There were captured in Blakely about 3,760 prisoners and all the artillery and munitions it contained. The final efforts that resulted in its capture were greatly aided, as indicated, by the fall of Spanish Fort. The moral effect of that event was greatly stimulating to the besiegers, and had a correspondingly depressing influence upon the besieged.

The capture of Spanish Fort and Blakely sealed the fate of Mobile. Batteries Tracy and Huger continued a feeble resistance for a day, giving a few hours' more time for General Maury to evacuate the city, which was surrendered to a column of Canby's forces on the 12th of April. Two divisions of the army under General 632 Granger were sent across the

bay, and moved into Mobile through its now vacated formidable land defenses on the southern front of the city.

The naval force employed in these operations performed useful service—the most effective, indeed, possible under the conditions it was required to encounter. It sought to overcome the obstructions planted in its path by every device and resource it could command, and in its efforts to make progress seemed to be animated by the admonition given by Farragut to his leading ship when he forced an entrance into Mobile bay in August, 1864, to “damn the torpedoes and go ahead.” Early in its operations three vessels of the squadron, the Milwaukee, Osage, and Rudolph, were sunk by torpedoes, and other of its boats more or less damaged. At the points of greatest difficulty, in addition to the obstructions in the channel, the navy had to meet the concentrated fire of many heavy guns of Spanish Fort, and of batteries Huger and Tracy, besides floating batteries located at points within commanding range. Had the siege been protracted, doubtless the navy would in time have cleared its way to where it might have closed the water communications of the enemy. It had accomplished much in overcoming obstructions it encountered, and the progress it was making may have influenced the enemy in his final purpose to evacuate the fort. During the siege several heavy guns were removed from the boats and placed in battery on land, where, served by marines, they gave material aid.

The total captures covered by operations against Mobile, as stated in General Canby's official order, were 5,000 prisoners, 300 pieces of artillery, and large stores of ammunition and other material of war. The official statement of Union losses was 1,508 in killed, wounded, and missing. The Confederate loss in killed and wounded, in the absence of accurate data, was estimated at about one-half that number.

The assault on Blakely occurred the same day that General Lee surrendered to General Grant. It was, therefore, the last considerable engagement and practically the last battle of the Civil War. The attention and interest of the country were at the time, of course, centered upon events occurring in Virginia, and the intelligence of the capture

of Mobile reaching the North some days 633 after Lee's surrender, and the assurance it gave that the war was practically at an end, did not make the impression on the public mind it otherwise would have done. Had the event occurred a few months, or even weeks, previous, the taking of Mobile would have been classed among the important achievements of the Union arms, and would have received from the country recognition and commendation commensurate with the credit it reflected upon the army that captured the last strategic position held by the Confederacy along its entire seacoast.

Immediately following the occupation of Mobile, the Sixteenth Army Corps was ordered to march to Montgomery, Alabama, and on the 14th of April the movement northward began.

While the campaign of Mobile was in progress the column of cavalry under General J. H. Wilson, to which reference has been made, moving from the Tennessee river March 22nd, had penetrated the country southward, capturing Selma, Alabama, on the 2nd of April, and occupied Montgomery on the 12th, the latter place surrendering without a contest. From thence moving eastward into Georgia, Wilson successively received the surrender of Columbus, West Point, and Macon, Georgia, reaching the latter place on the 18th of April. It was not expected, therefore, that the movement to Montgomery by the Sixteenth Corps would meet with serious resistance at any stage of its progress.

The march to Montgomery was without incident for several days and was becoming somewhat monotonous, when, as the command neared the city, there transpired a scene that none who were present will ever forget. The column had been halted for a brief rest. The day was hot. The men, footsore and weary, were reclining upon the grassy roadside, grateful for the few minutes' respite being granted them, when the attention of every one was directed to the approach of a courier from the direction to which the column was moving, riding at a “Sheridan gait” down the road. Was he bearing orders for us to double-quick to the front, to meet an enemy unexpectedly encountered? What else could be the purport of such a hasty errand? But what was the meaning of the hilarious antics of the men along the column in front? All were for a moment bewildered, but as the courier

dashed past, shouting, “Richmond is captured and Lee's army has surrendered,” the men 634 became simply frantic in their demonstrations of joy. There wasn't a weary or footsore man in that army then. The old veterans embraced each other, laughed, cried, shouted and sang. They threw hats, canteens, haversacks, blouses and even their muskets in the air, and as the column moved forward in continuation of the march, every voice joined in that grand refrain. “Hail Columbia.” The old veterans were happy. They knew that Lee's surrender meant that the war was over; that their years of toil and danger, privation and suffering, were at an end, and that they would soon embrace the loved ones at home. They went into bivouac that night after a long hard march, with a feeling of buoyancy they had not experienced in many months.

But their joy was turned to inexpressible grief and their hearts cruelly crushed when the army, having reached Montgomery, learned a day or two later of the assassination of President Lincoln. The revulsion of feeling caused by the intelligence of that event was simply terrible. Thoughts of muster out and return home were banished. The one and almost only desire that now animated the soul of the old soldier was to remain in the service and aid in avenging that awful crime.

During the following summer the Sixteenth Corps constituted the “army of occupation” of southwestern Alabama and southeastern Mississippi, its line reaching from Montgomery, Alabama, to Meridian, Mississippi. The Fifth Regiment was stationed at Demopolis, the Sixth at Montgomery, the Seventh at Selma, the Ninth at Marion, and the Tenth at Meridian. The war was over, and the soldiers' duty, aside from the routine of camp life, was to preserve order in the country, which was under martial law. We were in a country that had largely escaped the devastation of war, but whose people were intensely hostile. As they became better acquainted with the characteristics of the Yankee soldier, their attitude changed, and final relations were established of a most friendly character. Altogether the regiments spent a very pleasant summer, though the delay in relieving them from military service became irksome, and a feeling of impatience thereat was becoming manifest when the welcome order came that relieved the war-scarred veterans from

duty as soldiers of the republic and rehabilitated them as citizens of the country they had helped to save.

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Official Report of Colonel Lucius F. Hubbard, Fifth Minnesota Infantry, Commanding Second Brigade, of Operations March 20 to April 9 .

Hdqrs. Second Brig., First Div., Sixteenth Army Corps, Near Blakely, Ala., April 12, 1865.

Captain :—the following report of the part taken by the Second Brigade, First Division, Sixteenth Army Corps, in the operations that have recently culminated in the capture of Spanish Fort and its dependencies, is respectfully submitted.

On the 20th day of March the command broke camp on Dauphin island and moved by transports up Fish river; disembarked at Dannelly's Mills on the 21st, and encamped in the immediate vicinity. On the following day a new position was taken and intrenchments constructed, covering the front of the brigade, which were occupied as a line of defense until the 25th. On the 23rd and 24th our pickets were attacked by the enemy, but each time the latter was repulsed, with the occurrence of but a single casualty in this command.

At 8. A. M., on the 25th of March, the brigade, holding the advance of the corps, moved out on the Deer Park road. A small force of the enemy was soon encountered, with which skirmishing at once commenced. With four companies of the Ninth Minnesota Infantry deployed as skirmishers and the balance of the regiment as support, the enemy was steadily pressed back and the road made clear for the column to pass. Until ordered to halt and encamp for the night the skirmishers made no pause in their advance. During the following day's march the brigade, being in the rear, encountered no enemy.

On the 27th during the progress of the investment of Spanish Fort, the Second Brigade held a position in the center of and advanced in line of battle with the First Division. A line of skirmishers 636 deployed along my front, met those of the enemy within perhaps a

mile of the rebel defenses, and engaged them actively; the latter slowly giving way, but contesting the ground quite stubbornly. The line of battle advanced by degrees until a position was secured within about 800 yards of the fort, the enemy the while delivering from his works a spirited fire of musketry and artillery. During the following night a line of investment was established and the command employed intrenching the position. The Second Brigade held a front of our regiments running from right to left in the following order, viz., Eighth Wisconsin, Forty-seventh Illinois, Fifth Minnesota and Ninth Minnesota, the Eleventh Missouri being held in reserve. My skirmishers were advanced during the night and posted as pickets within 300 yards of the enemy's works. The 28th and 29th were spent in strengthening our defensive works and constructing bomb-proofs for the protection of the men. On the night of the 29th I commenced to run a sap in the direction of the fort, and on the 31st had reached a position and constructed a parallel within 300 yards of the main works of the enemy. This parallel was at once manned with sharpshooters, a detail of 250 picked men, the best shots in the brigade, being made for that purpose and placed under the command of Captain A. P. French, Fifth Minnesota Infantry, which detail was retained permanently on duty during the continuance of the siege. These sharpshooters rendered very effective service throughout the siege, greatly annoying the enemy's artillerists, in some instances compelling him to abandon the use of his guns and fill his embrasures with earth. Captain French is entitled to much credit for the efficient management of his command.

The work upon the approaches to the fort was actively prosecuted until the night of the 8th of April. At that date my sharpshooters had been advanced to a second parallel about 100 yards farther to the front, and my sappers had reached a point and partially constructed a parallel within sixty yards of the enemy's works. My first parallel had been converted into an emplacement, in which I had located a regiment, the Forty-seventh Illinois Infantry, as a support to the sharpshooters.

At about 2 A. M. of the 9th instant developments upon the right of our lines created a suspicion that the enemy was evacuating his works. Captain McGrew, of my staff, who at that time was superintending the operations of the sappers, directed Captain French to move forward his command of skirmishers and ascertain what enemy, if any, was in his front. The order was promptly obeyed, the enemy's pickets posted outside the fort captured without opposition, and the works found to be abandoned. Captain McGrew immediately moved the Forty-seventh Illinois, Major Bonham commanding, into the fort, and, crossing the ravine to the left, occupied Fort Alexis, placing guards upon the guns, magazines, and other property left by the enemy. In this work were ten pieces of artillery, one mortar, and much ammunition. In the meantime Captain French moved his skirmishers through Spanish Fort to the bank of the river at the point where the enemy was crossing, capturing several prisoners and one piece of artillery abandoned near the bridge.

About half an hour after the occupation of Fort Alexis by the Forty-seventh Illinois, the troops of General Bentons's Division, Thirteenth Army Corps, moved in, and Captain McGrew formally surrendered possession to Major Boydston, of General Benton's staff.

At 9 A. M. on the 9th instant, the command moved out on the Blakely road, and encamped at night near its present location.

During the siege of Spanish Fort the brigade excavated 7,000 cubic yards of earth and expended 169,000 rounds of musket ammunition. The labors of the siege were very arduous. The men were worked at large details, night and day, upon fortifications and approaches, yet they bore their trials patiently, and cheerfully responded to every call of whatever character. Colonels Marsh, Gere and Britton, and Majors Green and Bonham, commanding their respective regiments, were untiring in their efforts to facilitate the operations of the siege. Captain J. G. McGrew, aide-de-camp, rendered very valuable service while performing the dangerous duty of superintending the construction of the

approaches to the enemy's works. Captains Cleland and Kendall and Lieutenant Kelly are also entitled to much credit for their activity and energy during the recent operations.

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The total casualties suffered by the brigade within the time embraced in the above report is 99, as follows:

COMMAND. Killed. Wounded. Officers. Men. Officers Men. Total. 11th Missouri Veteran Infantry 1 5 27 33 8th Wisconsin Veteran Infantry 2 17 19 5th Minnesota Veteran Infantry 16 16 9th Minnesota Volunteer Infantry 2 1 13 16 47th Illinois Volunteer Infantry 1 3 11 15 Total 1 10 4 84 99

L. F. HUBBARD, *Colonel, Commanding Brigade* .

CAPT. W. H. F. RANDALL, *Assistant Adjutant General, First Division* .